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EDITED BY PROF. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A.

CHAPTERS ON JOB

FOR

YOUNG READERS.

BY

G. VANCE SMITH, B.A.,

PHILOS. & THEOL. DOCT.



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P R E F A C E.

THE particular purpose for which this little work has been written is perhaps sufficiently indicated in the title page. My chief aim has been to describe the more striking features of the Book of Job, those, especially, which seemed most likely to interest the class of readers immediately contemplated. For various obscure or doubtful expressions, here but lightly touched, recourse will be had to larger expositions, such as that of Dr. Samuel Cox, or the recent work of Dr. A. B. Davidson.

The higher religious lesson suggested in places by this sacred drama, has not been passed over without notice—and if, in a few instances, what is said should appear to be a little recondite for young readers, or beyond their immediate grasp, it may be hoped, nevertheless, that the difficulty thus arising will not fail to awaken thought, and in this way tend to exercise, perhaps, no indirect or unprofitable influence.

In the passages brought forward in illustration of my remarks, it will be seen that frequent slight deviations occur both from the Authorized Version and from the Revised. These changes are the result of consideration, and have been made with the desire to represent the original as closely as possible. On the other hand, *cases of agreement* with the Revised will also be found to be nume-

rous. In many instances I have been indebted for an improved rendering to the new text. I may add that these better renderings have not been simply transferred to my own pages from that work, but have also been tested by examination. In faithful translation, coincidences of this kind are not to be avoided ; and one who reads the original of Job in the light thrown upon it in succession by such commentators as Hirzel, Ewald, and Dillmann, will almost of necessity be led to many of the corrections common to these pages and to the Revised.

One other point demands a few words. I have preferred to retain the form JEHOVAH, as at any rate more poetical than the newer "Jahve" or "Yahveh." The latter, I can only regard as a kind of conjectural word, the right of which to supersede the ancient form has not as yet been conclusively established.

In pronouns connected with the divine name the use of the capital initial letter has for the most part been avoided—in accordance with the usage of the Authorised and Revised Versions. I have sometimes used the capital for the sake of distinction from an ordinary *he* or *his* in the immediate context. It may be added that in Hebrew the personal pronouns are very seldom employed as separate words. They are usually implied only in the form of the verb to which they belong.

G. V. S.

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CHAPTERS ON JOB.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—THE ANCIENT DOCTRINE OF TEMPORAL
RETRIBUTION—ITS CONNECTION WITH THE BOOK OF
JOB.

THE idea of temporal retribution is frequently met with in the pages of the Old Testament. It occurs under various forms, expressed or taken for granted, both in earlier and in later books, in the Mosaic law, and in most of the prophets and poetical writings. According to this idea, men are rewarded or punished, according to their conduct, by visible prosperity or adversity in the ordinary affairs of life. Righteousness, obedience to God's will, faithfulness to his worship, are to have their appropriate consequences of material well-being—increase of numbers, success in war, fruitful seasons, for the nation; and for the individual, health, long life, numerous children, abundance of every kind. On the other hand, unrighteousness, disobedience to the divine law, false

worship, are to have their corresponding punishments ; and the day of adversity, famine, bereavement, captivity, is to bring back the faithless people or the sinful man in penitence to the path of duty from which they have gone astray ; or, if not to bring them back, at least to inflict upon them the merited chastisement of their iniquities.

This idea is conveyed under different forms of expression, or it is indirectly suggested, in many familiar passages of the Hebrew Scriptures. We meet with it, for example, in the account of the transgression of the first human pair (Gen. iii.), in which we see the sin speedily followed by its evil consequences. So when Cain, after slaying his brother (Gen. iv.), is cursed for his crime ; when Jehovah, in his conversation with Abraham (Gen. xviii.), implies that he is about to visit Sodom and Gomorrah with punishment on account of their evil-doing ; when Noah with his family is saved at the flood because he is a just man and perfect, while all the rest of mankind are destroyed because of their wickedness (Gen. vi.) ; in these and numerous similar cases, the narrative has evidently been composed in accordance with the belief above described.

In the Mosaic law the principle of retribution is embodied in very definite forms. There is the familiar instance of the fifth commandment : ' Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee ' (Ex. xx. 12). In *Deuteronomy* (xxviii.) this principle is set forth in

elaborate and emphatic terms : ' It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments, that Jehovah thy God shall set thee on high above all nations of the earth ; and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God : ' then follows a long enumeration of the blessings spoken of, which are all of the outward and material kind, blessings in the city and in the field, in fruits of the ground and in cattle, in victories over enemies, and other consequences of the same kind—all this being recited as the great motive to obedience ; while on the other hand, the people are told that if they will not hearken, to observe and do all that is enjoined on them, they shall be exposed to ' cursing, vexation and rebuke, ' until they perish quickly, because of the wickedness of their doings, in forsaking Jehovah and neglecting his commandments. ✓

In the books of Psalms and Proverbs, as well as in the prophetic books, expressions to a similar effect are easily found ; and all lead to one conclusion, which is that this belief in temporal retribution was deeply rooted among the Hebrew people of old. It evidently gives tone and colour to much that their chief writers have left us, and it was no doubt, therefore, conceived to correspond to what they had actually experienced in the course of their national history.

The New Testament is not without indications of the existence of the same belief in the later periods of Jewish history. It lingered long in the nation, and would seem to have gathered strength as time went on, whether in spite of their national experiences or in consequence of them. Its presence can be traced in the case of 'those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell' (Luke xiii. 4). Jesus did not indeed sanction the idea that this calamity had come upon the sufferers as a punishment for their sins, but his question implies that many around him had drawn this inference from the occurrence. Similarly, in the case of the man that was born blind : no doubt the people of that time commonly considered that he was thus afflicted in consequence of sin committed either by himself or his parents (John ix. 2-3).^{*} Such illustrations might be multiplied ; but these are sufficient to show how popular and enduring was this ancient belief, and how ready the Hebrew people were to think that the divine displeasure against sin was indicated in the form of outward and visible calamities of one kind or another falling upon the evil doer.

But, firmly established as the doctrine of temporal retribution thus was among the writers of the Biblical books, it is impossible to regard that doctrine as absolutely true, or as one that was to endure and hold good for all time

^{*} Instances occur where the forgiveness of sin and the cure of *disease* are spoken of in such a way as to imply that disease was regarded as the result of sin. (See Matt. ix. 26.)

to come. Like some other things in the Bible, it comes down to us simply as the recorded belief of a people who were in a very early stage of their religious growth, as well as of their development in civilization generally. Their knowledge of the world of nature was of the rudest and most superficial kind ; and their laws, their religious customs and ideas, were in several ways of a corresponding character. With the Hebrews, as with other ancient peoples, it was left to future experience and the progress of knowledge to correct early and imperfect beliefs, and to substitute for them what should be truer and better. This idea of temporal retribution is a case in point. We do not find it verified by facts that good men are always prosperous in a worldly sense ; that bad men only are unfortunate. Indeed, if such were the law of Providence, virtue, uprightness, in any high sense of these terms, could hardly exist ; there would be no such thing as vice or unrighteousness, because there would be no temptation, but it would be everybody's interest, in the lowest sense of this word, to be upright, even for the sake of the advantages of a temporal kind which they might gain from being so.

To those, again, who accepted the doctrine in question, it would appear to involve conclusions of a very important kind. If it were true that obedience and transgression were always respectively followed by worldly prosperity and adversity, then you might always estimate a man's moral character by his outward condition.

he were unsuccessful in his business pursuits, or unfortunate in other conceivable ways, this would be a sure sign that he had led a sinful life ; if, on the contrary, he were successful, this would prove that he had been upright. Thus, temporal misfortune, even bodily disease, physical suffering, shortness of life, might all be interpreted as the evidence of past sin and marks of the Divine displeasure—as punishments inflicted by the righteous Judge of all upon his guilty creatures. Did calamity overwhelm an apparently upright man, this must be in consequence of some secret wickedness—unseen, it might be, by his fellow-men, but known to the all-seeing Eye.

In such ideas as these there is, without doubt, a certain element of truth—although it is impossible to accept them in the broad general form in which they have just been stated. An upright life of industry, self-denying virtue, and usefulness to others, is it not the one sure and only way that leads to the highest happiness? It may not bring temporal prosperity, but neither will it, as the rule, hinder a man from attaining this. And if it does not confer that kind of material good, it will, nevertheless, secure what is better—the secret witness of a conscience that is at peace with itself, and in that consciousness is also sure that it has the Divine blessing.

But with this proviso it must also be said that the old Biblical doctrine could not fail to come, in the course of time, to be thought doubtful, or untrue, and intolerable. *To many who implicitly held it, it would hang like a*

dark cloud over human life. Every little misfortune, or bodily illness, or bereavement, would be looked upon as a divine judgment upon some actual sin, present or past, of the suffering person.

Probably there are still those among us who believe in "judgments" of this kind, and that, too, in spite of the better knowledge of the laws of nature and providence which now widely prevails. Such persons would do well to recall that memorable saying of Christ, who tells us of God, the Heavenly Father, that he is good to all, even to the unthankful and the evil; that 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' We do not doubt, indeed, that He disapproves of sin; but he has not given to *us* authority to say that he manifests his disapproval by outward visitations of the material kind.* Nor can we doubt that he approves and blesses the just and holy life; but his approval and blessing are signified in other ways than by wealth or health, by prosperity in business, by fruitful fields, or successful mercantile adventures. These things, too, may happen to an unrighteous as well as to a righteous man—because the natural world in which we live is subject to fixed laws which are alike for all, and without regard to differences of moral character.

In the ancient times to which the writers of the Old Testament belonged, this important fact could not be so

* As for instance, by the cattle plague, the cholera, or earthquakes, bad harvests, or depression of trade, as some preachers will tell us.

clearly discerned. Yet some minds were beginning to have a truer insight into the ways of Divine Providence, and even to question or reject the doctrine that temporal calamity and affliction were sure signs of the Supreme displeasure. The idea of questioning and showing the untenableness of the old opinion would sooner or later suggest itself to one who thoughtfully reflected upon the subject. And as Jesus himself sought to convey the just principle to the minds of his disciples, so, we may understand, the writer of Job, in the earlier age to which he belonged, might think of discussing and correcting what he deemed wrong in the prevailing belief of his own time. To some such feeling and purpose as this the book of Scripture which he has left us probably owes its origin—although it might be going too far to say that the author sat down to its composition with any conscious and deliberate intention of refuting the ancient doctrine of retribution. Such, nevertheless, will be seen to be the substantial outcome of the statements and reasonings which he brings before his readers.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOOK OF JOB, A POETICAL COMPOSITION—REASONS
FOR SO CONSIDERING IT.

BEFORE proceeding to speak of the argument of the book, it may be well to say a few words as to the literary form in which the author has chosen to convey his ideas. With the exception of the first two chapters and the last, the work is a poetical composition ; all the rest of it presenting the usual characteristic feature of poetical style, as this is found in the Hebrew writings. Apart from the elevated and imaginative qualities of the subject-matter which are usually expected in poetry, and which are certainly not wanting in this book, the feature alluded to consists simply of the peculiarity which is termed *parallelism*. Hebrew poetry has no metre or rhyme ; but in place of these, a certain repetition or modification in a succeeding sentence, or in two or more such sentences, of the thought which has already been expressed in a preceding line. Thus, for example, in Ps. xlvii. 1-5 :

O clap your hands, all ye peoples ;
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For Jehovah most high is terrible,

He is a great King over all the earth.
He shall subdue peoples under us,
And nations under our feet.

God is gone up with a shout,
Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises,
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

The whole of this psalm forms a good example of the parallelism, which, however, is often less regular and firm than it is here. Sometimes, too, the parallel structure is interfered with and obscured, if not obliterated, by the greater number of words required for an English rendering of the original.

The above is an example of what is termed the *synonymous* parallelism, in which very much the same sense is expressed in each second line. This will sometimes run on through several members, and instances occur also in which it is alternate, a first and third line corresponding to each other, and a second and fourth. Another kind of parallelism is the *antithetical*, in which the second line repeats the sentiment of the first in some negative form, or else affords a kind of contrast or opposition to it. Thus, Prov. x. 1. 7 :

‘A wise son rejoiceth his father,
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.’

‘The memory of the just is a blessing,
But the name of the wicked shall rot.’

Instances of these different kinds of structure may easily be found by a careful reader of the poetical books as well as in the prophetical writings, which are largely poetical. Such instances are constantly met with in the book of Job, as will be seen from the quotations contained in the following pages.

It may be noticed, in connection with this part of our subject, that the Hebrew prose writers also have a constant tendency to fall into the same form of composition. This arises from the simplicity or even poverty of the language, as seen in its comparative want of particles, the fewness of its tense-forms, and the small use which is made of the relative pronoun. These circumstances give origin to directness and brevity in the form of the sentences, one proposition being added on to another by the constant use of the same connecting particle, the little word 'and,' which recurs in the original very much oftener than might be inferred from the English version. The same peculiarities give rise to the tendency to parallelism, just referred to, which is observable in the introductory chapters of this book, for example, almost as much in places, as in the more properly poetical portions.

What has just been said relates only to the literary form in which the thoughts and reasonings of the author of Job are presented. In other respects, that is to say, as regards the subject-matter of the work, this, it is agreed on all hands, is of the highest quality. The book is conspicuous among Biblical writings, for elevation of

sentiment, for the vivid and various character of its expressions, for its graphic descriptions of natural objects, and for the justness and force of its conceptions of the Divine greatness, power, and wisdom.

✓ In the next place, the substance of the work claims our attention. The author has founded his poems upon a certain portion of the life of a patriarchal man named Job. This name in its Hebrew form probably signifies one adversely or hostilely treated, one persecuted—a meaning which easily suggests the inference that the work is not an account of a real, but of an imaginary person, whose name has been given to him by the poet in accordance with the incidents related of him. In other words, the work is one of imagination, a poetical composition, founded it may be, upon some long-descended tradition respecting the fortunes of an ancient person whose history is unknown to us, except as introduced in this book. Job is indeed mentioned by name as a righteous man, in Ezeziel and in the New Testament;* but beyond this we have no information concerning him. As before said, the name Job appears to be adapted to the story; and this, as well as much in the first and the concluding chapter, appears to warrant the conclusion that the author himself had no intention of putting the work before his readers as a book of history, in any proper sense of this word.

* Ezeziel xiv. 14 ; James v. 2.

Compositions of this character, intended to set forth some important principle or doctrine, or anticipation of the future, in the manner of historical narrative, appear to have been in favour among the later Hebrews. The book of Jonah is probably a work of this kind; not really offered by the author as a narrative of actual occurrences, but only as the vehicle for recommending his great idea that the mercy of God is not confined to Jews only, but extended also to Gentiles who repent of their evil doing. With this principal thought are probably connected other ideas which are subordinate to it, the narrative of Jonah and his adventures being made the channel through which the leading design is carried out. Very probably, a similar character belongs to the book of Ecclesiastes and to the book of Daniel; while among the so-called Apocryphal books of the Old Testament other instances occur, to say nothing of the Book of Enoch, which is another, though somewhat different case of the same kind.

If this be correct, the patriarch Job is not, properly speaking, an historical personage, and there is nothing to be said, or sought for, as regards the age to which he belonged, or the country in which he dwelt. This latter is stated to have been 'the land of Uz,' but it is hardly known where this was; or, rather, what region in particular the author intended to designate by the name. Conjectures are easy enough, but they are conjectures only. It will be safe to say that it was somewhere to the

eastward of Judea, on account of the expression in chap. i. 3.

✓ It may be noted, as an additional indication of the non-historical character of the book, that in the last chapter Job is said to be recompensed for his sufferings by receiving just the double of all that he had lost. His seven thousand sheep are made fourteen, his three thousand camels become six, his five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses become respectively a thousand. At the same time, it is no doubt to be understood, his own health and vigour are restored, so that he lived a hundred and forty years after his recovery. Moreover, the seven sons and three daughters whom he had lost are replaced by exactly the same number of other children of each sex, and 'so Job died old and full of days.' All this is evidently what may be termed 'poetical justice : ' but it is little in accordance with the usual course of human experience ; or with the supposition that the book is offered to us as a book of history.

✓ The same remark applies, of course, to what may be termed the celestial or supernatural machinery of the poem. To this we are introduced in the first chapter. The representation is continued in the second chapter, and taken up again after a long interval in the concluding portion of the book, in which Jehovah himself speaks to Job out of the whirlwind.

It is evident, finally, that fictitious characters and *imaginary* occurrences would answer the author's im-

mediate purpose quite as well as persons and events that were real, or historical. He wanted a framework or medium in which to convey his various reasonings on the Divine government, and this might be as readily and fitly provided by the invention of the poet as by actual experience. All that was necessary, in adopting the purely poetical form, would be that persons and incidents should be in sufficient agreement with facts of experience and with the common ideas of the time in reference to things supernatural.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTRODUCTORY OR NARRATIVE PORTION OF THE
BOOK.

THE work opens with a description of the circumstances of the patriarch. But first of all his moral character is set forth. He is 'a perfect and an upright man, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.' Such a man, according to the common idea, ought to be prosperous, and Job is so. He is rich in all the objects which in those ancient times constituted material wealth, and were believed to ensure temporal happiness. Flocks and herds and camels and asses, and along with these a very great household. In addition, sons and daughters are born to him, and they, equally with himself, are endowed with worldly goods. In the midst of all this, Job does not forget the duties of piety; and in due order, as the days come round, he offers for his family the fitting expiatory sacrifice, lest his children, in their birth-day festivities, should have sinned and renounced God in *their hearts*.

Additional particulars, illustrative of the perfectness of

Job's character, are mentioned in the course of the discussion, showing us how decided an impression the author intended to give both of his personal goodness and uprightness and of his social importance. In chap. xxix. we are further shown, in Job's own words, how he was a friend to the poor, the oppressed, and the fatherless. When he sat as a judge at the gate of the city, righteousness clothed him there, and his justice was as a robe and a diadem upon him. He brake the jaws of the wicked and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. And moreover, he was humble, for he did not despise the cause of his man-servant or his maid-servant when they contended with him, knowing that He that made him, had made them also. The blessing of the poor and of him that was ready to perish came upon him and he made the widow's heart to sing for joy. In such expressions we have a picture of the highest human excellence. Jehovah himself bears testimony to it ; for He declares of Job that there was 'none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man' that feared God and departed from evil. ✓

But the scene changes. The Satan* presents himself before Jehovah, and, being asked if he has considered the rare excellence of Job's character, he suggests that it all springs from a species of selfishness. Job does not fear God for nought. He is protected and prospered, and his substance is increased in the land ; but if Jehovah ✓

* For a more detailed account of this being, see the next chapter.

will 'touch all that he hath,' if He will visit him with affliction, then, the accuser declares, Job will curse God to his face. On this, the Satan receives permission to do his will; provided only that he does not lay his hand upon Job himself. The result is, that a series of the most dreadful calamities is permitted to fall upon the patriarch, such as may put his piety to the severest test, and show whether or not the imputation of the Satan is well founded.

To bring this to the proof, and thus to show in particular that misfortune does not of necessity cause a good man to part with his integrity, or abandon his trust in God, has been thought to be the principal object of the book. Such may, indeed, very well be regarded as a subordinate and incidental part of the author's purpose, but it should hardly be taken as the whole substance of it. An indirect intimation to this effect is afforded by the words, 'Does Job fear God for nought?'—a question by which the Satan implies that the hitherto prosperous man has received the reward of his righteousness. This conspicuous virtue springs, therefore, from selfish motives. Not being disinterested, it is not so genuine and perfect as might appear. But this imputation is put into the mouth of the Satan, and, being speedily shown to be unfounded and calumnious, it is evidently not accepted by the writer of the book; while his refusal to sanction it is, so far as it goes, in evident harmony with his *main design* to question or to repel the idea that

unprosperous circumstances are the sure sign of a wicked life.

It is doubtless to be understood, that in consequence of the Satan's intervention, one calamity after another now falls upon the hapless man. But the result is only to bring out the indomitable strength of his piety. He not only bears the test ; he does not even murmur at his misfortunes. When the last of the evil tidings reached him, then, we are told, Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head (as a mourner, and in sign of his grief), and fell down upon the ground and worshipped ; and said, 'Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away ; blessed be the name of Jehovah.' It is a striking and touching picture, most graphically drawn, though in the fewest and simplest colours ; and very fitly does the writer add the remark, 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.'

But a greater trial is yet to come :—so, at least, it appeared to the author of the book ; greater than all the bereavements and losses which had hitherto fallen upon Job. Once more the Satan is admitted into the divine presence. He hears from Jehovah himself of the continued integrity of his servant. The reply is ready, again attributing Job's submission and fidelity as before to a species of self-love on his part. He is willing, it is suggested, to sacrifice everything he possesses if only he may preserve his own life and be himself spared from *suffering in his own person*. On this, Jehovah gives per-

mission to renew the trial ; this time in the form of the most dreadful bodily inflictions. 'So went the Satan forth . . . and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.' The disease thus briefly described is alluded to more than once in the course of the poem. From these allusions it may be gathered that the author intended to denote a loathsome kind of leprosy, in which the limbs become swollen, the joints stiff, the flesh ulcerated or in parts hard and scaly, this condition terminating in a lingering death. It is a disease met with in Egypt, and the introduction of it here may be regarded as one of several indications of the composition of the poem by a Hebrew writer acquainted with that country, or even a resident in it. The statement made in ch. ii. 8, also shows with Homeric force and quaintness the dreadful nature of the affliction. What the sufferer did was intended to relieve the itching which accompanied his disease, and remove the offensive matter which proceeded from the sores. In this condition Job gives fresh proof of his patience and his religious fidelity. When his wife suggested to him to renounce God and die, he told her that she spoke only as a foolish woman. Shall we receive good, he said, at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

The ensuing section of the story tells how the three *friends of Job* came to mourn with him and to comfort him. Of these persons, or the localities to which they belonged, little or nothing is known, beyond what is here

stated.* Their presence in the book is accounted for simply by the necessity of providing suitable characters to participate in the discussion which forms the substance of the poem. The three friends are found to maintain in substance the old and commonly received views of temporal retribution, which Job impugns. In this respect they agree with each other, while each nevertheless has some differences of matter and manner peculiar to himself.

They seat themselves upon the ground to mourn with Job, and so continue day after day, for seven days and seven nights. For this period, we are to understand, nothing is said; so great and unutterable are the grief and the amazement of the friends: then at length Job pours forth his woe, and gives occasion to the first speech of Eliphaz.

* The inhabitants of Teman had a reputation for wisdom. Hence probably the poet's selection of Eliphaz the Temanite as a disputant with Job. (*Studia Biblica*, p. 209; comp. Jer. xlix. 7, Obad. vv. 8. 9.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE SATAN OF JOB—THE SABEANS AND CHALDEANS.

SOME of the particulars introduced in the preceding chapter require a more detailed notice than they have as yet received. These are the terms Satan, Sabeans, Chaldeans, and the statements connected with them.

To take the minor words first: Who the Sabeans were, or rather, what was meant to be represented by the original word,* is not at all clear, and can only be conjecturally ascertained. Very probably the statement ascribes the loss of the oxen and asses, and the slaying of their keepers, to a predatory tribe of Bedouins of the desert, bearing a name which indicates their relationship to a people of South Arabia, whose ruler was the Queen of Sheba, mentioned in connection with the history of Solomon. But though bearing this name and belonging to the same race, the Sabeans of Job must have been *conceived* of as living at a great distance from their

* The original is a noun, singular, *Seba*, which may be taken to be identical with the word elsewhere rendered Sheba. (1 Kings x. 1-13.)

southern kinsmen, and as entirely different from the latter in their mode of life, addicted as they would seem to have been to plunder and violence. There need be no question that the name denotes a class of mauraders of whom the author had some knowledge, otherwise he would not have introduced it in this way.

It is equally difficult to say who are meant by the word Chaldeans. It is known from the ancient inscriptions of Assyria that a people bearing this name became predominant in the provinces on the lower Euphrates in the ninth century, B.C. They even became so powerful that their name spread all over the country of Babylonia, Some of them may have been simply robber hordes, who made inroads upon neighbouring and wealthy regions. It is difficult to see how they could have extended their incursions so far as the land in which Job is supposed to have lived, the land of Uz. But in a poetical work like this book, such a difficulty amounts to little; and the author could bring Chaldeans to inflict calamity upon Job and his children, as easily as he could summon the Satan to hold a conversation with Jehovah among the sons of God. The Chaldeans, therefore, as well as the Sabeans in their connection with Job, may be only the product of the poet's imagination. Or, again, if the author of this book lived in that later period of the *Hebrew monarchy* which was closed by the great captivity, he would have some knowledge of the bands

of Chaldeans and other invaders who at that time overran the country.¹ These would readily suggest to him the instruments of devastation needed for completing the details of his picture.

The SATAN of Job is quite a unique conception in the Biblical books. He is not apparently to be regarded as the same being as the Satan, or devil (*diabolus*), of the New Testament. In Job, he is one who presents himself in the presence of Jehovah, and among 'the sons of God,' that is to say, he appears as an agent of Jehovah, acting only by His permission and in His service. Most probably, this was the author's idea of his office. He is one whose duty it is to go about among men, to observe and bring an account of their conduct to Jehovah. He is not as yet conceived of as the great implacable enemy of God and man, as he came to be in later times. Hence we have in Job, no doubt, an early form of the idea of Satan; and the conception of his character and work was destined to undergo a kind of development in the popular belief of the Jews, before it reached the stage in which we find it in the Christian books.

The only other places besides Job in which Satan is named in the Old Testament are three. (1.) In the first book of Chronicles, xxi. Here (verse 1) it is written that he instigated David the king to number the people: '*Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to*

¹ See 2 Kings, xxiv. 2, where, however, the word rendered "*bands*" is not the same as in Job i. 17.

number the people.' In the parallel account in the second book of Samuel, xxiv., this numbering of the people is ascribed to Jehovah : 'The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah.' Why it was so wrong a thing to 'number' the people, we are not told ; but in the one book the action is said to be suggested by Satan, while, in the other, it is suggested by Jehovah himself. Now the Chronicles are well ascertained to be *late* books. They are among the very latest writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, and were written long after the return from the captivity. The books of Samuel, on the contrary, are comparatively early ; and so we see, what is regarded as an evil deed is, by the earlier writer, ascribed to Jehovah, and, by the later, attributed to Satan. The belief in Satan had grown up into influence in the interval since Samuel was written, and the author or authors of the Chronicles (who are entirely unknown to us) thought it fit to attribute the evil act of the numbering to Satan, rather than to Jehovah. (2.) A second instance in which the name and person of Satan are introduced in the Old Testament is the book of Zechariah, chap. iii. Here the prophet has a kind of vision ; he says that he saw Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah, and the Satan standing at his right hand to resist him : 'and Jehovah said unto the Satan, Jehovah shall rebuke thee, *O Satan.*' Now the book of Zechariah consists of three *distinct* portions, of which the first (i.-viii.) is known

to be of late origin, that is to say, to have been written after the return from the captivity. This is sufficiently shown by the indications of time given in this first part, whereas the second and third portions (ix.-xi. ; xii.-xiv.) come down from an earlier period. It is the latest portion in which the Satan is introduced. (3.)

A third instance occurs in Ps. cix. 6, 'Let Satan stand at his right hand.' This is one of the later psalms, although it is ascribed in the inscription, but without authority, to David, as so many of these compositions are. In this instance, it is doubtful, whether the personal Satan is meant, as there is here no article before the word as in the other cases, except 1 Chron. xxi. 17; and it may therefore simply mean an *adversary*, in general, as is suggested by verse 4, where the same word occurs as a verb. Such are the three instances in which this word is found in the Old Testament, and it is clear that it is absent from all the oldest writings of the Hebrew literature. Genesis, ch. iii., makes no exception to this statement, as many might suppose; for it will be seen that the Satan is not mentioned at all in that passage, a serpent, and a serpent only, being spoken of as the medium of the temptation of Eve.

All this is very significant. It points directly to the suggestion that this doctrine of Satan was not of native *Hebrew origin*; seeing that is wholly absent from the *oldest prophets*, by whom no use whatever is made of the *conception*. This warrants the conclusion that it must

have come in among the Jews through their intercourse with the various Gentile nations at, or before, the time of the captivity. It is well known that the ancient Persian religion acknowledged the existence of two opposite principles, virtually two rival deities, in the creation and government of the world. These beings were in perpetual conflict. The great object of the bad spirit is to work evil and disorder in the world. He wages a kind of war upon men, and seeks to tempt them to what is destructive and wrong. He too has innumerable evil spirits or demons to assist him ; one of whom is introduced by name in the ancient apocryphal book of Tobit. Some other Oriental nations are known to have had a similar belief. Of these may be specified the Assyrians and Babylonians, with whom the Jews of the captivity, and of preceding times, were brought into close contact.

The conception of Satan would be the more readily admitted by the Hebrews, inasmuch as it might seem to afford the means of accounting for many of the evils of life, which they would be unwilling to ascribe to Jehovah. Yet the principal prophets of the Old Testament, as just observed, know nothing and tell us nothing, of such a being. On the contrary, they rather represent Jehovah as the one Supreme power and cause of the universe. Expressions occur which tend to show that they would rather discourage this idea of a great rival deity, second *only to Jehovah himself*: 'I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil ; I, Jehovah, do

all these things.' So writes the later Isaiah (xliv. 7) speaking for Jehovah. Nevertheless, the belief in question gradually grew up, and it is seen in its more complete and developed form in the New Testament.

It thus became one of the elements which were unavoidably grafted upon the primitive Christianity ;—one which, it may be presumed, like the old Biblical belief in witches and witchcraft, is destined to disappear before the light of better knowledge, now so largely given to the world—and given, should we not say, by the Supreme Will itself? *

* The word Satan, it may be added, simply means *adversary* or *opponent*, and the connected verb *to oppose, resist*—as Zech. iii. 1.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE AGE AND AUTHOR OF THE BOOK.

As is the case with the greater number of the Biblical writings, the author of this book is entirely unknown to us. Nothing that can be depended on has come down from ancient times on the subject of authorship, although a variety of persons might be suggested, and have been suggested, from Moses downwards to the captivity, as likely to have been the writers of such a work. But there is no certainty on the point, and in the absence of positive evidence there is little use in speculating about it. Such will be found to be the conclusion in which most or all recent authorities of any note are contented to rest.

The time of the composition of the work is, perhaps, somewhat more within our reach, seeing that several various considerations agree in pointing to one and the same conclusion—a fact of much interest, if it be not altogether conclusive.

What has been said in the preceding chapter on the subject of Satan at once suggests the comparative lateness

of the composition. We have seen that, apart from Job, it is only in the later portions of the Old Testament that the conception of the Satan is found. It does not perhaps necessarily follow that the occurrence of the Satan in this book proves the latter to be of late origin. But it tends to render this a reasonable conclusion, especially in the absence of positive evidence to the contrary. The writer of Job evidently lived at a time when the conception of the Satan had become familiar to his people. This could scarcely have been much before the great captivity, or some reference to the doctrine would have been found in the prophets who lived before that time, from Jeremiah upwards. Thus we are brought to a time for the composition of the work when the Hebrews through their intercourse with foreign nations might have become familiar with the doctrine of the evil spirit, and might have adopted it as an article of their theological belief.

Along with this consideration, we have to remember what is said in Job respecting the Chaldeans, as before pointed out. It is quite probable that these bands were a portion of the invading hosts of Nebuchadnezzar. If so, the writer, at some time subsequent to the invasion, we do not know how long, composed this work, attributing to the Chaldeans a principal part in the misfortunes *which fell upon Job*

On the other hand, there are considerations which might appear to be inconsistent with the supposition of

so late a date. In some of his descriptions and allusions the author takes us back to the patriarchal age. His leading character is a personage of substance and position of the olden times. This personage officiates also as a priest, much as Abraham and Noah did, himself offering the burnt offerings for his sons and daughters, as afterwards (chap. xlii.) for the three friends. He lived therefore, it might appear, in the times preceding the origin of the regular priesthood, and the author writes as if he were personally familiar with those times. Moreover, there is no allusion, throughout the book, to the Mosaic laws and institutions. Did not, then, the author of this work live *before* those laws and institutions were introduced? If so, it follows that his age was a somewhat remote one, even on the supposition that the Mosaic system itself was of comparatively late origin. But these inferences are evidently uncertain. The picture of patriarchal life may be simply a part of the poetry of the book, introduced, not because the poet himself lived so far back in antiquity as the age of which he speaks, but because he chose to place the scene of his poem amidst the antique simplicity of a long bygone age. So it may be in regard to the absence of allusions to the Mosaic system. This may arise only from the plan and purpose of the book. The Hebrew prophets and some other Old Testament books are equally destitute of express references to that system. It does not follow that they were written before the age of Moses, while yet, indeed, it is

an important fact in determining the age of the Mosaic institutions, that the older prophetic books make no allusion to them.

There is a further consideration which has been urged in favour of the high antiquity of the book of Job. It is the archaic character of the language in which the poem is written. This it is not practicable to describe here in detail. But it may be mentioned, that the book contains many words of rare occurrence, and which may be thought to have been laid aside, or fallen out of use, in the later stages of the Hebrew language. There is too, a roughness, a brevity, and a want of consecutiveness in the style of the book, such as may be thought to indicate a very primitive period of literary workmanship. But it is impossible to insist upon these features, as indicating more than the literary art of the writer—if indeed so much as this. He may have simply chosen to use the language and the style which he has adopted, because he deemed them suitable to the subject of his poem. Moreover, it will be admitted by competent judges that Hebrew poetry of every period presents features which are much the same as those which have just been mentioned as found in Job. It has in general, many rare words not usual in prose ; the sentences are often short and abrupt, and wanting in logical consecutiveness ; and *frequently as a result of this, the meaning is more or less obscure.* This may be seen in Psalms and in other *writings which are not supposed to belong to the oldest*

period of the literature—as, for example, in Psalms lxxiii. lxxiv., and in many parts of the later Isaiah. It is always to be remembered too, that the prologue and epilogue of the book of Job are written in the ordinary prose of *late* writers. If these portions are from the author of the rest of the book, as they must be held to be, it will follow that the somewhat different and archaic style of the latter was simply adopted by the writer, as before suggested, and affords no conclusive proof of the high antiquity of what he has written.

To complete this part of our subject, a fact of much interest remains to be mentioned. The book contains allusions and descriptions which bear a distinctly Egyptian character, such as to indicate that the writer was familiar with Egypt. There is the disease under which Job suffers, which is said to have been especially a disease of that country. There is what some have taken to be a reference to the pyramids (iii. 14), but which is no doubt obscure and somewhat doubtful. Mining operations are spoken of in chap. xxviii., and these, there is reason to believe, were carried on in the eastern part of Egypt near the Red Sea, while yet it is true that such operations were not unknown in Palestine. Towards the close of the book there are the curious descriptions of the hippopotamus and the crocodile (xl., xli.), which show, both of them, an intimate knowledge of *these Egyptian* creatures on the part of the author. *There are several incidental allusions to the Nile, or to*

objects connected with that river ; there is also an allusion of a very exceptional kind, namely, to the phoenix (xxix. 18), a fabulous bird described by Herodotus in his account of Egypt, and especially associated by him with that country. All this seems to point to the author as one who was familiar with Egypt ; and would seem to raise a strong presumption, if not to justify the conclusion which has been adopted by some authorities, that the writer of Job was resident in that country when he composed his work. If it be said that he may have written as he has done on the subjects named, and introduced the allusions just noticed, simply from his general knowledge of such subjects, while this is true, it is also to be remembered that some of his descriptions are graphic and detailed, and such as may fairly suggest an acquaintance that was close and personal.

The foregoing particulars combine to suggest Egypt as the land in which the book of Job was written. If so, it is further probable that the author was either a Hebrew who was brought into Egypt at the time of the invasion of Judah by Pharaoh-Necho, near the end of the seventh century before Christ (see 2 Kings, xxiii. 29) ; or otherwise, one of those who, at the time of the captivity, fled from their own land and took refuge in Egypt.

✓ The prophet Jeremiah was one of this number. The *author of Job* may have been another. This supposition *would place the composition of the book in the sixth century, that is to say, subsequent to the year 580, B.C.,*

at the earliest.* It may have been still later, on account of the marked prominence given to the doctrine of Satan. The period now referred to is for other reasons more probable than one of high antiquity. For, that times of trouble and foreign invasion were familiar to the author, may be inferred both from the nature of the argument and from positive expressions which occur, as in chap. xii. Here, speaking of the greatness and might of God, he uses these words—

He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
And maketh the judges fools ;
He looseth the band of kings,
And girdeth their loins with a girdle ;
He leadeth princes away spoiled,
And overthroweth the mighty.

He increaseth the nations,
And destroyeth them.
He enlargeth the nations,
And straiteneth them again.

In the next chapter (xiii. 1), Job is represented as saying that his eye hath seen all this, his ear hath heard and understood it : words indicating the author's personal

* Dillmann inclines to an earlier date, chiefly on the alleged ground that the prophet Jeremiah was acquainted with the book, and even quotes its words. But the instances of this cannot be accepted as conclusive. Dr. A. B. Davidson's conclusion as to the probable age of the book is very much the same as that above given.

experience of what he describes. The argument of the book thus reflects an age of extreme disquiet and trouble, of calamity, national and individual, such as we see also in the later chapters (xl.-xlii.) of Jeremiah. Such an argument could hardly have proceeded from one familiar only with the tranquil scenes of nomad or pastoral life, or who had lived in ignorance of the invasions and captivities of the later periods of Jewish history. Accordingly we may reasonably place him not at all near the beginnings of the recorded history of his people, but rather a considerable way down in the long course of national experience, though it is not possible to say with certainty, whether he lived in the seventh or in the sixth century B.C.; nor whether the captivity of the kingdom of Israel, or the later captivity of Judah, may have given him occasion to write as he has done in the above cited verses.

In the foregoing account of the author's design, it has not been thought necessary to take notice of an idea which has been entertained by some writers. But it may be briefly mentioned that the work has been supposed to be a kind of allegory in which Job represents the people of Israel in the sufferings of the captivity. According to this view, the argument turns upon the unhappy fortunes of the nation, and is intended to discuss the question why they should have been allowed thus to suffer. There *appears to be really nothing in the book to suggest or justify so fanciful an account of its purpose.*

CHAPTER VI.

PLAN OF THE DISCUSSION—FIRST SPEECH OF JOB, WITH THE REPLY OF ELIPHAZ.

THE purpose of the author being to the effect now pointed out, the plan which he has followed is simple. He puts his ideas into the form of a long and elaborate discussion between Job and his three friends.

(1) Job commences the argument, and is answered by Eliphaz. (2) Job speaks in reply, and is followed by Bildad, who, more or less directly, addresses himself to what Job has just advanced. (3) Job again speaks, maintaining his own position and replying to Bildad. He is then answered by Zophar. This completes the first round of the discussion—Job's three speeches being severally answered by the three friends respectively. A second series follows, the speakers and speeches succeeding each other in the same order. This is followed by a third series, making, in all, three courses of argument and counter-argument. The third of these, however, is incomplete as will be noticed in the proper place.

The larger part of the book is occupied with the three

sections, or sets of speeches just enumerated, but a considerable portion remains, containing the speeches of Elihu and of Jehovah, which will be found to form an essential and important part of the whole work.

Chap. iii.—Job, overwhelmed by his calamities, commences the discussion with a vehement denunciation of the day of his birth :—

Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, A man-child is conceived.
Let that day be darkness ;
Let not God regard it from above,
And let not the light shine upon it.

Then he wishes that he had died immediately on his birth ; that he might now have slept and been quiet in the grave :—

With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Who build lonely sepulchres for themselves ;
Or with princes that had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver :
Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been ;
As infants which never saw light.
There the wicked cease from troubling ;
And there the weary are at rest.

There the prisoners are at ease together ;
They hear not the voice of the oppressor.

Small and great are there ;

And the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,

And life unto the bitter in soul ;
Which long for death, but it cometh not ;
And dig for it more than for hid treasures ;
Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad
When they can find the grave ? (iii. 13-21.)

Job further speaks of himself as one 'whose way is hid,' 'whom God hath hedged in,' whose sighing comes to him as frequently, or as regularly, as his food, and whose strong cries are poured out like water ;—expressive words which probably signify that the sufferer does not know where to turn for relief from his misery. In the words of verse 14, freely rendered "lonely sepulchres," we have the supposed reference* to the pyramids, the mausoleums of the great Egyptian kings of former ages,—vast and imposing when this book was written, as they still are.

In many such expressions here and elsewhere, Job gives utterance to his pent-up feelings of wretchedness and despair, gradually implying also his want of submission to the Divine ordinations. Of this impatient tone, Eliphaz, in the speech which follows, appears to take notice. He commences (chap. iv.) with words less of comfort than of rebuke and remonstrance. Job, he observes, had instructed and strengthened others, but faints and fails under affliction, now that it has come upon himself.

* *The meaning must be considered uncertain ; but "waste places" can scarcely be right, though it expresses the usual meaning of the original word.*

His religious faith, his 'fear' of God, ought to give him confidence; the integrity of his ways should be the source of hope to him. This speech is remarkable for its statement of the retribution doctrine, on which the three friends take their stand :—

Remember, I pray thee,

Who has ever perished, being innocent?

Or where were the righteous cut off?

They that plow iniquity, Eliphaz declares, and sow trouble, reap the same.

By the breath of God they perish,

And by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

This is expressed a second time under the figure of the lions, of which the meaning probably is that the workers of iniquity perish and are destroyed like savage beasts—this again implying the retribution which falls on evil-doers, and suggesting not indirectly that suffering and misfortune have not fallen upon Job without a cause. But, more than this, his complainings amount, in effect, to an impeachment of the Divine justice. To all this Eliphaz replies, and he does so in one of the most striking passages of the book :—

Now a thing was secretly brought to me,

And mine ear received a whisper thereof;

In thoughts from visions of the night,

When deep sleep falleth on men,

Fear came upon me and trembling,

Which made all my bones to shake.

Then a spirit passed before my face ;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance ;
A form was before mine eyes ;
There was silence, and I heard a voice—
Shall mortal man be more just than God ?
Shall a man be more pure than his Maker ?
Behold he putteth no trust in his servants ;
And his angels he chargeth with folly.
How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Which are crushed before the moth. (iv. 12-19.)

From this position it follows, and the inference is evidently intended by the author, that, however a man may suffer, no injustice or unholiness can be attributed to God on account of his sufferings. The cause of these must be in himself ; his own conduct must have brought them upon him ; for He who is infinitely pure and righteous cannot be supposed to inflict an unjust punishment upon any of his creatures.

In the next place (chap. v.) Eliphaz declares that Job's complainings will not avail him, and will bring him no answer. They will only do him injury. The expressions here and the connection of the thoughts are obscure, but the words may be taken to mean that destruction is ever near to the foolish (impious) man. The source of his *misery is in his own folly*, and his natural tendency to *sin* :—

For affliction cometh not forth of the dust,
Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;
But man is born unto trouble,
As the sparks fly upwards. (v. 6, 7.)

Affliction does not arise without a cause, but is sent in consequence of the sins to which man is so prone.

Then Eliphaz proceeds to state how he would himself act, if he were in Job's place. He would 'seek unto God,' and to Him he would commit his cause—to Him who doeth great and unsearchable things, who is able to save the poor and needy and to disappoint the purposes of the crafty. He exhorts his friend not to despise the chastening of the Almighty, but to receive it with humility, and let it lead him to repentance. If he will do this, Eliphaz promises him the return of happier days, with the prosperity and plenty that a righteous man deserves. Job shall come to his grave in a full age, like a sheaf of ripe corn in its season :—

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth ;
Therefore despise thou not the chastening of the
Almighty ;

For he maketh sore and bindeth up ;
He woundeth, and his hands make whole.
He shall deliver thee in six troubles,

*Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. **
In famine he shall redeem thee from death ;

* *Meaning, in many or repeated troubles.*

And in war from the power of the sword.

And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace,
And thou shalt visit thy pastures and shall not miss
anything,

Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
Like as a shock of corn cometh in its season.

Lo this, we have searched it, so it is ;
Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

(v. 17-27.)

In these promises of Eliphaz there is a clear expression of the idea of temporal retribution. If Job will rightly receive and profit by the divine visitations, he shall be rescued from his misery and restored to happiness.

Thus closes the first of the answers given by the friends to Job's lamentations—the first scene, as it may be termed, of this sacred drama. Thus far, the question to be discussed is but indistinctly suggested, but as the dialogue proceeds it is more fully brought into view.

CHAPTER VII.

SECOND AND THIRD SPEECHES OF JOB WITH THE REPLIES
OF BILDAD AND ZOPHAR.

THE second speech of Job occupies chaps. vi. and vii. His impetuous words, he says, are not disproportioned to his sufferings. As the wild ass does not bray over his grass, or the ox over his fodder, so he, the persecuted man, does not speak without a cause. His afflictions are like tasteless or loathsome food to him. If he could only die, if it would but please God to crush him, he would be content, and even exult in his end. He has no strength, or help, or hope, that he should be patient and wait for better times. He complains that his friends have deceived him—as travellers in the desert are deceived by the distant appearance of water which proves to be an illusion; they go up into the waste, but are confounded and perish, not finding what they had hoped for. So, his friends *have done nothing* for him, as indeed he did not ask *anything of them*. He appeals to them to show him *with kindly words* wherein he has erred, and not to deal

too severely with his desperate words. Let them be just to him ; the cause he defends is righteous ; he does not speak falsely to them. Then (in chap. vii.) he goes on to refer in pathetic terms to the sorrow and wretchedness in which his days are passing from him ; they are as the days of a hireling, slowly coming to their allotted end. His nights too are long and wearisome, and give him no repose. He alludes (ver. 5) to the terrible character of his disease, from which he can only anticipate death. He breaks out into a sudden appeal to God, asking in the anguish of his spirit why he should be watched like some dangerous sea (perhaps an allusion to the Nile overflowing) or sea monster, as if to prevent him from doing some harm. Why should he be harassed and oppressed thus, left without rest, terrified with dreams and visions, so that his soul would choose death, rather than this miserable life. Again he appeals despairingly to God himself, and asks why He should visit him, to afflict him thus. Can He not let him alone for a very little while (ver. 19) ? Even if he has sinned, this can have done no harm to God. Can He not pardon his transgression ? He will soon be gone from life, and when God shall seek him he shall no longer be :—

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him ?

That thou shouldest set thy heart upon him ?

And shouldest visit him every morning,

And try him every moment ?

How long wilt thou not look away from me,

Nor let me alone till I swallow my spittle? *
If I have sinned, what do I unto thee,
O thou observer of men ?
Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee,
So that I am a burden to myself ?
And why dost thou not pardon my transgression,
And take away mine iniquity ?
For now shall I lie down in the dust ;
And thou shalt seek me diligently,
But I shall not be.

(vii. 17-21.)

This speech is one of much pathos, but it is difficult, in places, to trace the connection of the thoughts, so that the whole has a rough and broken character, such as suits well to the state of mind in which the speaker may be conceived to be. It is clear, however, that Job firmly maintains his position. He does not admit that his sufferings are the consequence of his past sins. He will not allow this, although he implies throughout that they proceed from God ; and so, as before, he leaves it to be inferred that God is chargeable with undue severity, if not with injustice, in permitting him to be thus afflicted. Thus the feelings of Job may be seen to have gradually undergone a change, since the close of the first chapter, where he is expressly said to have bowed down in worship, *and not to have sinned with his lips, or charged God*

* That is, for the shortest interval.

foolishly. This altered tone becomes more evident as the dialogue proceeds.

Bildad (in chap. viii.) takes up the argument with special reference to this change, and the implied reflection on the divine justice. Passing over the rest of Job's reply to Eliphaz, he reaffirms the righteousness of God, even in the misfortunes of Job and his children. But, he adds, though the children have perished, still Job may himself return to prosperity, if he will seek God and make supplication to him :—

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite and said,
How long wilt thou speak these things ?

Doth God pervert judgment ?

Or doth the Almighty pervert justice ?

If thy children have sinned against him,

And he have cast them into the power of their transgression :

If thou wouldest diligently seek unto God,

And make thy supplication to the Almighty ;

If thou wert pure and upright,

Surely now he would awake for thee,

And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

Though thy beginning was small,

Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

(viii. 1-7.)

In proof of his position, Bildad appeals to the experi-

ence of the former age. The fathers of old times will teach the same doctrine—even that the wicked shall perish, like the rush (the papyrus) of the Nile banks, when left without its native mud, or like the reed grass which withers away with equal rapidity, if deprived of water. The same thought is enforced by other expressive figures—the spider's web, the house that falls, the vine sending its shoots abroad for a while over the garden, and encircling the heap of stones, but then suddenly perishing, so that its place shall deny it, and know nothing of it. But, though such is the fate of the wicked, God will not cast away a perfect man, and Job may yet be restored to joy, and his mouth be filled with laughter.

Thus speaking, Bildad seems to refrain from directly imputing Job's sufferings to his sins, while nevertheless maintaining the perfect justice of God. In other respects, the speech of Bildad is little more than a repetition of what Eliphaz had urged. In reference, therefore, to his main position that God doth not pervert justice, Job now (chap. ix.) replies, conceding, apparently, that it is so: Man cannot be just as against God. He cannot contend against one who is so wise and so mighty. Job then enters upon a description of the surpassing greatness and power of the Almighty. In His hand are all visible things, earth, and sun, and stars, the mountains, and the *waves of the sea*, and He doeth great things which are *past finding out*. He is invisible, but his presence is *ever there*. None can hinder him in his actions, or

resist his anger, but all must stoop under him, even the most arrogant assailers of his might :—

But how can man be just with God ?

If he should be pleased to contend with him,

He cannot answer him of a thousand.

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength :

Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered ?

It is he that removeth mountains,

And men know it not,

Who overturneth them in his anger.

Who shaketh the earth out of her place,

And the pillars thereof tremble ;

Who commandeth the sun,

And it riseth not,

And sealeth up the stars ;

Who alone spreadeth out the heavens,

And treadeth upon the waves of the sea ;

Who maketh Arcturus [the Bear], Orion, and the Pleiades,

And the chambers of the South ; *

Who doeth great things, past finding out,

Yea, marvellous things without number.

Lo, he goeth by me and I see him not ;

He passeth on also, and I perceive him not.

Behold he taketh away,

Who can make him restore ?

* *Meaning, the constellations of the Southern sky.*

Who shall say unto him, what doest thou?
 God will not withdraw his anger;
 The helpers of Rahab bow down under him. *
 How much less shall I answer him,
 And choose out my words with him?
 For though I were righteous I could not answer,
 I would make supplication to my Judge,
 Even if I called and he should answer me,
 I would not believe that he hearkened to my voice. †
 (ix. 2-16.)

Job thus in effect confesses his inability to justify himself with God. He appears, however, to imply that even though his cause were righteous he would have little chance of being heard by an antagonist so exalted above him (ix. 15-22). In his increasing despair he is led to doubt whether God would distinguish between the inno-

* *Rahab* occurs as a name of Egypt (Isa. xxx. 7, Ps. lxxxvii. 4, and other places). The word expresses arrogance, ferocity; and is thought also to denote the monstrous creature (the leviathan or crocodile, Job xli. 1), which was a symbol of Egypt. The expression in the text is obscure, but it is taken by many interpreters to refer to some old mythological story, according to which this monster and his helpers were all overcome in some contest with God. This again may possibly be based upon the ancient tradition of the Exodus.

† The figures in the last few lines are taken from [Egyptian?] law proceedings. To *call*, i.e., to summon; to *answer*, i.e., to reply to the summons; *judge*, Job would only venture to appeal to God as his judge, not to meet him as an adversary. However innocent, he declares, he would not be able to speak through terror in the presence of such an opponent as God.

cent and the wicked, for does He not blind the judges of the earth, so that they let the wicked prevail? The harshness of his friends has driven Job to this unhappy attitude. He refers again to his own sorrows, and to the swiftness with which his days are passing from him, comparing it to the speed of the light vessels of reed upon the Nile, or the swoop of the eagle upon his prey. In another place he speaks of the weariness which he felt, as though his days and nights were passing too slowly from him—a natural inconsistency of expression on the part of a suffering man.

The idea in these similitudes is that the speaker is perishing quickly, and that his labour in defending himself is in vain. It will be of no avail that he shall show himself innocent; God will not hold him to be so. He, the feeble and perishing man, cannot stand before the Infinite, cannot answer him, or speak to him on equal terms :—

If I say, I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my *sadness of* countenance
And I will be of good cheer,
I am afraid of all my sorrows,
I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

• • • • •
If I wash myself *clean* as snow,
And make my hands never so clean;
Yet wilt thou plunge me in the ditch,
And mine own clothes shall abhor me.

For he is not a man as I am,
That I should answer him,
That we should come together in judgment.
There is no umpire between us,
That might lay his hand upon us both.
Let him take his rod away from me,
And let not his terror make me afraid :
Then would I speak and not fear him ;
For thus (*as I am*) I am not myself.

(ix. 27-35.)

Thus again, Job, for the time, has lost his confidence in God, and does not feel that he would be justly dealt with, even if he were admitted to plead with Him. This hopelessness does not proceed from any consciousness of guilt ; but simply from the awe he would feel before his Judge, from the sense of his own weak and helpless state as compared with him who 'is not a man,' who seeth not 'as man seeth,' and out of whose hand no one 'can deliver' (x. 4-7).

In his despair, he now declares that he is weary of life (chap. x.). He goes so far as to impute it to God that He persecutes him without reason, that he despises the work of his hands, that he searches out sin in Job, though he knows that he is not guilty. By various figures in the latter part of this chapter, Job further expresses his sense of the severity of the treatment he has received from God (x. 8-17). Again he appeals to Him to cease from this persecution, and to let

him rest for a little while before he goes hence to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, where the very light is as darkness :—

Cease then and let me alone,
That I may take comfort a little,
Before I go whence I shall not return,
Even to the land of darkness and the shadow of
death,
A land of darkness like the thickest darkness,
Of the shadow of death, without any order,
And where the light is as thick darkness.

(x. 20-22.)

This third speech of Job is marked throughout by the same features which appear in most of his language. The expressions employed are strange and harsh at times and difficult to interpret, while often also forcible and poetical. The impression produced, as before, is that Job persists in complaining of God's dealings with him. He does not admit what the friends contend for, that he has deserved his misfortunes. These are rather the arbitrary infliction of an irresistible power, and so far as we have gone, they are received by the sufferer with a sullen despair, which brings upon him the strong rebuke of Zophar, the third speaker.

The reply of Zophar occupies chap. xi. He strongly blames Job for his rash words. He wishes that God *would speak and show him the secrets of Divine wisdom.* Then would Job know that his penalty is less than his

iniquity had deserved. But the deep things of God cannot be searched out by man :—

The deep things of God canst thou find out?
Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?
It is high as heaven, what canst thou do?
Deeper than the grave, what canst thou know?
The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
And broader than the sea.
If he pass through, and shut up, and call unto
judgment,
Then who can hinder him?

xi. 7-10.)

Job has spoken without understanding (Zophar continues), and must now set his heart aright, stretch out his hands to God, and put iniquity away from him. If he will do this, he is told, he shall forget his misery, his prosperity shall return to him, he shall lie down, and none shall make him afraid. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail; they shall have no escape; their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

In these latter words, it is evident that this speaker expresses the old idea of temporal retribution. For (it is implied) just as Job's unrighteousness has brought his sufferings upon him, so, if he will now repent and put iniquity away, his prosperity shall return, and all his *present miseries* be forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUANCE OF THE DISCUSSION—TWO LONG SPEECHES OF JOB, WITH THE REPLIES OF ELIPHAZ AND BILDAD (XII.-XVIII.)—JOB'S WANT OF HOPE IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE (XIV.).

THE chapter (xi.) just concluded completes the first round of the discussion. Each of the three friends has now answered and reprov'd the impatient temper of Job and the complainings which he has uttered. But the sufferer has much more to say. He is not silenced or abashed ; very far from this ; he returns to the argument with even greater vehemence than before.

This new speech (chaps. xii., xiii., xiv.) is one of the longest and most important in the book. It is full of matter expressed in figurative language, with abrupt transitions and pathetic appeals against the terrible afflictions so mysteriously laid upon the sufferer. The last chapter of the three (xiv.) is one of despairing thoughts, revealing the speaker's want of hope in regard to his condition, showing at the same time how little it had occurred to him to think of the trials of life as the

discipline calculated to prepare sinful men for the higher sphere of a future existence.

Job begins (xii.) in a tone of indignant irony. His friends, he then declares, have spoken presumptuously, as if with a full understanding of his evil case. But he knows as well as they do, and the common-place arguments which they have used cannot set aside or account for the fact of his sufferings. Their words have rather made light of his misery, and turned it to sport. He says :—

I am become as one whom his friend derideth,
 Who calleth upon God to answer him ;
 The righteous, perfect man is derided ;
 For my misfortune there is contempt,
 In the thoughts of him that is at ease ;
Prepared for one* whose foot slippeth.

(xii. 4, 5.)

The feeling that such injustice is done to him drives him to an extreme of argument which is the direct antithesis to what the friends maintain. They have said that the sinner must suffer, and that suffering is the sure sign of past sin. The contrary is true! The tents of robbers (ver. 6.) are not overthrown ; they prosper ; and they that provoke God are secure. But the speaker seems immediately to shrink from this defiant utterance, and *suddenly, by the use of a strong adversative word which is but feebly represented by 'But,'* (ver. 7), he changes

* Literally, *them*.

his tone, and refers all that has come upon him to the arbitrary will of God. All nature, in heaven, and earth, and sea, will proclaim the irresistible power of Jehovah, and testify that He has done it :—

Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
Who knoweth not by all these things,
That the hand of Jehovah hath done this?
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind.

(xii. 7-9.)

It is the simple decree, the uncaused will, of Jehovah, that has brought all upon his servant. The connection of verse 11 with what precedes and follows is not clear. It may be a proverbial expression : ' Doth not the ear try words, even as the palate tasteth food ? ' And so Job tests and refutes the imputations made against him in the speeches of his friends. With the aged, indeed, is wisdom (as Bildad had said in chap. viii.), and in length of days is understanding ; but with God are wisdom, power, understanding, safety, in a far higher degree still :—

With him is wisdom and might,
To him belong counsel and understanding.

*Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up,
He sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth,*

With him is strength and safety,
The deceived and the deceiver are his.

(xii. 13-15.)

The succeeding verses (16-25) give various examples of the ways in which this divine power is manifested. Rulers, kings, judges, princes, the eloquent, the mighty among men, the peoples of the earth, nations, and their chiefs, are all within God's control; the hidden things of darkness, and the shadow of death are equally before Him. Job knows this quite as well as do the friends, so that in all they have said, they have not helped the argument at all :—

Lo (he says), mine eye hath seen all this,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.

What ye know, I know also, I am not inferior to you. With these words commences chap. xiii., asserting the speaker's right and power to judge for himself, and to repel the false arguments used against him.

The words of Job now become somewhat broken and unconnected, as well as rapid in their transitions from one topic to another. He proceeds :—

But as for me to the mighty one I would speak,
And I would desire to reason with God ;
But ye are framers of falsehood,
Worthless physicians all of you.

(xiii. 3, 4.)

He wishes they would be silent and hearken to what he has to urge in his appeal to his Judge. He suggests that they speak unrighteously and deceitfully for God,

that they even flatter Him. This conduct shall bring punishment upon them. The memorable sayings formerly brought forward by them from others (chap. viii.), are worthless 'proverbs of ashes,' their arguments defences of clay. 'Hold your peace (he exclaims), that I, even I, may speak, and let come on me whatever will' (ver. 13).

This indignant outburst against the friends introduces the expression of Job's determination to turn from them to address himself to God, whatever the risks of this course may be. According to the ancient belief, a man cannot see God and live. But Job will not shrink from this danger. Why should he seek to save himself by refraining even to speak with God, carrying off his flesh (as it were) in his teeth, as a wild animal does its prey? Even his life he will take in his hand, that he may speak with God and maintain his ways before Him. Here, however, the better feeling of religious trust reasserts itself. God, he is sure, would be his salvation, if he were but permitted to speak to him. A godless man would not dare to come before him; and so Job has the assurance within himself that he is innocent. The succeeding words (xiii. 17-22), addressed at first to the friends, gradually change and become a direct appeal to God. Job calls on them to hear him; he has ordered his cause, and knows that he is righteous, otherwise he would hold his peace, and resign himself to die. He then turns abruptly to his Maker, his words assuming the character of a com-

plaint against the harsh treatment which has been dealt to him. Speaking to God, he says :—

Only do not two things unto me,
Then will I not hide myself from thee :
Withdraw thine hand far from me,
And let not thy terror make me afraid.
Then call thou and I will answer ;
Or let me speak and answer thou me.
How many are mine iniquities and sins ?
Make me to know my transgression and my sin.

(xiii. 20-23.)

This call upon the Divine justice continues in varying strains to the close of chap. xiii.

In somewhat moderated words, Job declares that he is treated as an enemy, harassed and driven like a leaf, or like dry stubble before the wind ; that bitter accusations have been brought against him as in a trial ; that he has been made to inherit the iniquities of his youth ; that his feet have been put in fetters, his paths marked and circumscribed, so that he cannot move freely.—and all this though he is but a feeble or a rotten thing, that wastes away like a moth-eaten garment. He then goes on in chap. xiv. to dwell at some length on the frailty and sinfulness of man, and gives us to see the despair which he felt of having justice done to him, or being ever restored *to his lost happiness*. The passage in which this is expressed is one of the finest in the book, or indeed in the *whole Bible*. The language is eloquent, and the parallel

structure of the verses mostly correct and smooth. The thoughts expressed are in a high degree plaintive and touching, although the form in which they are clothed is often quaint and remote from our ordinary modes of speech.

The connection of this chapter with the rest of Job's speech appears to be in the idea of the frailty and sinfulness of man rendering him unworthy of the attention of so mighty and exalted a being as God. Why then does He open his eyes to look upon his frail and sinful creature? Why does he expect what is pure from what is impure? God should let him pass away into the grave, from which he has no hope or thought of a return to life. The following is as close and literal a version of this chapter as can perhaps be given, due regard being had to the forms of our own language :—

Man that is born of woman

Is of few days and full of trouble.

He cometh forth like a flower and withereth,

He passeth away also as a shadow,

And abideth not.

Upon such an one dost thou open thine eyes,

And bring me into judgment with thee?

Who can make a clean thing come out of an unclean?

Not one.

Seeing his days are determined,

The number of his months is with thee,

Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.

Look away from him, that he may rest,
Till he shall enjoy as a hireling his day.
For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,
That it will sprout again,*
And that the tender branch thereof will not cease ;
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof die in the ground,
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
And bring forth boughs like a plant.
But man dieth and lieth prostrate,
Yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he ?
The waters fail from the sea,†
And a river drieth up and is dry,
So man lieth down and riseth not ;
Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of their sleep.
Oh ! that thou wouldst hide me in the grave,
That thou wouldest keep me secret,
Until thy wrath be past ;
That thou wouldst appoint me a set time,

* It is unreasonable (Job implies) to expect freedom from sin in one frail and feeble like himself ; let him then have his short life in peace, within its allotted limits, until he has finished his appointed time, as the hireling does. For (verse 7) man has no hope of living again, though the tree that is cut down may revive. The more reason to leave him to himself now.

† "The sea" : so, literally ; but, probably, referring to the overflowing Nile, presenting the appearance of a wide expanse of water. See *Isaiah xix. 5, 6*. So "a river," in the next line, with an implied reference to the same river shrinking and drying up.

And *then* remember me ! *

If a man die shall he live *again*?

All the days of my warfare would I wait,

Till my release should come.

Thou shouldest call and I would answer thee ;

Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thine
hands.

But now thou numberest my steps ;

Dost thou not watch over my sin ?

My transgression is sealed up in a bag,

And thou fastenest up mine iniquity.†

But truly, *as* the mountain falling wasteth away,

And the rock is removed out of its place ;

As the waters wear the stones,

And their overflowings wash away the dust of the earth,

So thou destroyest the hope of man.

Thou prevailest for ever against him,

And he goeth away ;

* Attributing his sufferings to the Divine anger, Job wishes that he could be hidden in the grave for a time, till it be past, and then brought to life again, at some appointed time.

† Vv. 16, 17 : God observes him (Job says), numbering his steps and watching him, and putting his transgressions (as it were) in a bag, to keep them to witness against him. Thus his persecutor heaps up charges against him and leaves him no hope. He seems in these words almost to admit that his sufferings have come upon him as a punishment ; but he probably still holds himself innocent. The import of this figurative language is sometimes obscure, but the sum of the passage is that the speaker has no hope of any result but destruction.

Thou changest his countenance,
And sendest him forth.
His sons come to honour,
And he knoweth it not,
And they are brought low,
But he perceiveth it not of them.
His flesh upon him hath only pain,
And his soul within him mourneth. (xiv. 1-22.)

To this long speech Eliphaz replies by accusing Job of presumption and impiety. He expresses himself with eagerness, and rebukes his friend for claiming to understand the ways of God better than the three friends. Job's language, he says, has been such that he is self-condemned out of his own mouth. But they know as much as he does, and they have the testimony of the aged on their side. What they have said to him about the justice of God's dealings should have consoled him, and led him to repent of the iniquities which have been visited upon him. Instead of this, he had given way to anger in word and look, and turned himself against God.

Thus Eliphaz remonstrates with Job, and then he enters upon another striking description of the sinfulness of man before God :—

What is man, that he should be pure,
And one born of woman that he should be righteous ;
Behold He putteth no trust in his holy ones,
And the heavens are not pure in his sight :

How much less one that is abominable and corrupt,
A man that drinketh iniquity like water ! (xiv. 14-16.)

Following up this personal attack upon Job, Eliphaz proceeds in more general terms to describe "the wicked man." In this he re-asserts the ancient doctrine which had been received from the fathers and wise men who lived in the old times, before strangers had come into the land. All manner of distress and anguish shall come upon the oppressor in his pride. Though he may prosper for a time, and have become fat and rich in the possessions of others, this shall not continue. His iniquity shall find him out :—

He shall not depart out of darkness,
A scorching blast shall dry up his branches.
And by the breath of his mouth shall he pass away.
Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself ;
For vanity shall be his reward.
It shall be fulfilled before his time,
And his branch shall not be green.
He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,
And shall cast off his flower as the olive ;
For the company of the profane shall be a barren rock,
And fire shall consume the tents of bribery ;
They conceive sorrow and bring forth iniquity,
And their breast prepareth deceit. (xv. 30-35.)

In these words, Eliphaz does not speak to Job directly

so as to apply to him this description of the unrighteous man. But there is evidently a side reference to Job all through, as may be easily seen ; and the patriarch answers accordingly in the two following chapters, in which he first with scornful impetuosity refers to what Eliphaz has just said, and then, after alluding to the miseries of his own position, he proceeds to complain bitterly that God has delivered him up to such "miserable comforters." From ver. 9 to ver. 11 he speaks in this strain, but then suddenly turns as before to address the great Cause of his sufferings. In extraordinary and daring figures he describes the severity of his treatment at the hands of God :—

I was at ease and he breaketh me asunder.

Yea, he hath taken me by my neck and dashed me in pieces,

He hath also set me up for his mark ;

His archers compass me about ;

He pierceth my reins and spareth not,

He poureth out my gall upon the ground.

My face is red with weeping,

And on my eyelids is the shadow of death ;

Although there is no violence in my hands,

And my prayer is pure. (xvi. 12-17.)

He then, with great pathos, calls on earth and heaven to testify for him, and in subdued language expresses his earnest desire to speak to God :—

O earth, cover not thou my blood,
 And let my cry have no resting place ;
 Even now my witness is in heaven,
 And he that voucheth for me is on high,
 My friends deride me :
 But mine eye poureth out tears unto God ;
 That one [I] might plead with God,
 Even as a son of man *speaketh* to his friend !
 For few are the years to come,
 And I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

(xvi. 18-22.)

In the next chapter (xvii.) this sorrowful strain continues, alternating with references to the harshness of the friends, and with appeals to God, whom Job addresses at one moment as his judge, and at another as a witness able to speak in his behalf. So in ver. 3,

Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself ;
 Who is there that will strike hands with me ?
 as testifying, that is to say, to his innocence. He does not expect this from his friends (ver. 4). But they shall suffer for it :—

One that denounceth his friends for a prey,
 Even the eyes of his children shall fail.

This is what Eliphaz has done ; so that Job is made an object of contempt (one whose face is spit upon). He continues to speak of his wretched state, but in terms *the connection of which with his argument it is difficult to see.* The innocent [beholder] shall rouse himself

against the profane friend ; while yet the righteous man shall not be utterly cast down. He concludes the speech by again denying the wisdom of those who have deceived and disappointed him, and again in plaintive words setting forth his miserable and hopeless condition.

This speech of Job has occupied two chapters, its length indicating, again, the writer's sympathy with the afflicted man, and his design to show that he, and not the friends, has the best of the argument.

But they are not without their reply ; and following the same order, as in the previous set of speeches, Bildad resumes the defence. He remonstrates with Job for the way in which he has spoken. He then goes on to re-assert his doctrine that calamity shall overtake the godless man. The course of nature and providence shall not be changed for Job (ver. 4), but the sure consequences of wickedness shall fall upon the wicked :—

Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,

The light shall be dark in his tent,

And his lamp above him shall be put out ;

The steps of his strength shall be straitened,

And his own counsel shall cast him down. (xviii. 5-7.)

This strain continues to the end of the chapter, the whole forming a terrible picture of the fate which shall overtake the unrighteous, according to the accepted theory of the friends :—

Terrors shall make him afraid on every side,
And shall chase him at his heels ;
His strength shall be wasted with hunger,
And calamity shall be ready at his side ;
It shall devour the members of his body,
The first-born of death shall devour his members,
He shall be rooted out of his tent wherein he trusted,
And he shall be brought to the king of terrors.

His remembrance shall perish from the land,
And he shall have no name in the street ;
He shall be driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
He shall have neither son nor grand-son among his
people,
Nor any remaining where he sojourned.
They that come after shall be astonished at his day,
As they that went before him were affrighted.
Surely, such are the dwellings of the unrighteous,
And this is the place of him that knoweth not God.

(xviii. 11-21.)

CHAPTER IX.

JOB'S CONFIDENCE IN JEHOVAH AS HIS VINDICATOR IN
SPITE OF HIS MISERABLE CONDITION—DID HE
HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE?

IN his reply to the foregoing speech of Bildad, Job (chap. xix.) exclaims impatiently against the reproaches of the friends. He then proceeds to plead in piteous terms that God has broken and crushed him down of his own arbitrary will. He cries for justice (he declares), but he is not heard, he knows not where to turn; darkness is in his path; all hope is gone from him. He dwells upon the visible consequences of this Divine wrath, treated as he is as an adversary of God. His kinsmen, his familiar friends, the servants of his house, even his wife, and the children of his household, treat him contemptuously or with neglect. Nothing seems to be wanting to fill up the bitter cup of his misery:—

All my intimate friends abhor me;

And they whom I loved are turned against me.

He has, he says, barely escaped with his life, alluding

to the terrible effects of his disease ; he then, in his agony, exclaims :—

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me.

O ye my friends ;

For the hand of God hath touched me.

It is no accidental or ordinary cause, but the very purpose of God, which has brought him into this condition.

Still, in the midst of all this misery, the writer shows us that Job is not utterly abandoned to despair. He probably intended to set before his readers the feelings of submission and trust which ought to be the support of the righteous man in the midst of calamity. The latter part of this chapter, one of the noblest passages in the poem, may be fitly ascribed to a motive of this kind. It forms, in effect, an earnest and impassioned expression of Job's reliance on the ultimate justice of the Almighty. Thus, even out of manifold suffering, may grow up the highest character, the patience, submission, and faithfulness to duty of the hero and the martyr. Job, we must remember, is overwhelmed by misfortune and bodily suffering. The friends to whom he had looked for sympathy and support have disappointed him—maintaining, as in effect they do, that it is in consequence of his own iniquities that he is permitted to be thus afflicted. He himself knows better ; and believes, in the face of all, *that the divine justice must eventually vindicate itself, and vindicate him, the suffering man, in the sight*

of all the world. If Jehovah be a being of truth and right, he cannot permit that truth and right shall be calumniated and overthrown in Job's person ; or that the wrongful imputations of the friends shall pass without meeting, sooner or later, with their refutation.

All this is expressed in the peculiar and difficult language of the book. Job appeals to his friends :—

Why do ye persecute me as God,

And are not satisfied with my flesh ?

That is to say, why are they not satisfied with the sufferings of his body, but further charge iniquity upon him, condemning and persecuting him anew with their arguments, even as God has done. He proceeds :—

Oh that now my words were written,

That they were inscribed in a book ;

That with an iron pen and with lead,

They were graven on the rock for ever.

For I know that my Vindicator liveth,

And that he shall stand up hereafter on the dust,

And after my skin hath been thus destroyed,

Yet *even* without my flesh I shall see God ;

Whom I shall see on my side,

And mine eyes shall behold, and not another ;

My reins are consumed within me. (xix. 23-27.)

The latter part of this passage is obscure, and the *meaning can only be given somewhat conjecturally. It is useless to pretend to a certainty which is not warranted by the case.*

But a general meaning in harmony with the purpose of the book may be drawn from the words, something like the following, which cannot be very far from that intended to be expressed. Job wishes first (vv. 23, 24) that his words were written, and might thus be fixed and clear, in case he should die, so as to speak to posterity for his vindication, and receive the eventual approval of Jehovah as he feels sure they will. Nay, he would have them graven on a rock, and the letters filled up with molten lead, as was done in ancient inscriptions to preserve them the longer. Then however, the thought occurs to him that a speedier vindication of his innocence might be given; and it *will* be given! For he knows that his Vindicator lives and must at last speak for him. The original word 'goel' here rendered Vindicator, is elsewhere translated 'avenger' and 'revenger.' It denoted the nearest kinsman of a murdered or captured person, whose duty it was (under certain regulations) to avenge any injustice done to his relative, to seek vengeance for his death, or to redeem him from bondage. Job therefore, using this word figuratively, expresses by it his belief that Jehovah will prove to be his 'goel,' or avenger. HE will stand upon the earth hereafter on his behalf, and though disease has so fearfully torn his body, yet even without his flesh he shall be permitted to see Jehovah on his side, speaking for him and not for the friends. The rendering *might be* :—

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Whom I shall behold on my side,
And mine eyes shall behold,
And he will not be estranged from me.

This he eagerly desires ; for this his reins are consumed within him. In the difficult expression 'even without my flesh,' he probably refers to the effects of the disease upon him. Notwithstanding that these are of so dreadful a character and have reduced, or may reduce, him to a mere skeleton, still he is sure that the divine justice must allow him to live long enough to see his Vindicator, Jehovah, make known the innocence of his servant in spite of, and in opposition to, the imputations and arguments of the friends.

The next following verses (28, 29) are extremely obscure, and there may be some corruption of the text. Their purport would appear to be to threaten the friends with punishment for their unsympathising judgments.

But, however this may be, the passage cannot, it would appear, refer to a resurrection of Job hereafter to a new life. It speaks simply of the appearance of Jehovah as his 'goel,' and this perhaps before his death. If this be so, the verses commencing with the words, 'I know that my Redeemer [vindicator] liveth,' are improperly introduced in the Burial Service of the English Prayer Book. They have no original meaning such as *can make it fitting* so to apply them ; but, as so *applied, they are simply torn from their natural context and made to receive a meaning which does not belong to*

them—a mode of treating texts from the Bible which is too prevalent with popular teachers and expositors. Such a use, or misuse, of Scripture is highly objectionable and hardly to be reconciled with the respect due to books to which a special character of authority and sanctity is so commonly ascribed.

It is here to be noticed, as one of the remarkable features of this book, that it makes no certain allusion to the future state; nor has it anywhere an expression of hope or belief in the invisible world, as the sphere in which the suffering Job shall be vindicated and pronounced not to deserve the injurious imputations that have been thrown upon him. In Job's condition such an appeal to the future would have been highly appropriate, or even inevitable, had the belief referred to been held by the author. He uses language, however, which seems to indicate that he did not entertain such a belief. Hence we may again conclude, the words of chap. xix. (25-27) were not intended to convey the meaning popularly attributed to them.

This statement may be illustrated by a brief return to what we have read in chap. xiv. Job speaks there of the brevity and frailty of human life, which, he says, are such that he, feeble and mortal as he is, is unworthy even to be assailed by such an antagonist as the Almighty. He appeals to God to let him alone until he shall accomplish *his brief* appointed time. He will soon be gone *without the prospect of reviving*. In the case of a tree,

indeed, there is hope, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again :—

But man dieth, and is laid low ;

Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?

The waters fail from the sea,

And the river drieth up :

So man lieth down and riseth not ;

Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,

Nor be roused out of their sleep.

Then he expresses the wish that he might be hidden in Sheol (the unseen state) and kept there until the Divine wrath against him should be past ; he would gladly wait until he should be called for, and Jehovah should desire his return. But this cannot be. As the mountain falling is destroyed, as the rock is removed out of its place, and as stones are worn away by the waters, so the hope of man is destroyed ; he passeth away :—

His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not,

And they are brought low, but he perceivèth it not of them.

In such expressions as these there is little or nothing to warrant the inference that the writer of them could have held the belief in a future state, or consequently that he can have intended in chap. xix. to represent the subject of his poem as looking forward to a '*resurrection*,' for the vindication of his innocence. It follows that what he anticipates is the appearance of *Jehovah* to testify to his righteousness. His words in

chap. xix. are thus an anticipation of what actually occurs later in the book—that is to say, in chap. xxxvii. and the following chapters. In this latter passage the Almighty is represented as speaking in vindication of Job, and in reproof of his antagonists, thus fulfilling the wish which Job had expressed in the earlier speech of chap. xix.

CHAPTER X.

ZOPHAR, IN REPLY TO JOB'S LAST SPEECH—FOLLOWED
BY JOB AND BY ELIPHAZ IN ANSWER TO HIM—JOB'S
FURTHER REPLY AND BILDAD'S ANSWER.

IN reply to Job, Zophar persistently re-affirms the doctrine held by himself and his friends. Destruction of the most dreadful kind shall surely overtake the profane man. And not only this, but it shall come suddenly and soon. On this Zophar lays great stress, while Bildad had chiefly insisted upon the completeness of the punishment :—

Knowest thou not this of old,
Since man was placed upon the earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the profane man but for a moment ?
Though his excellency mount up to the heavens,
And his head reach unto the clouds,
Like his own dung he shall perish for ever.

They which have seen him shall say, where is he ?
He shall flee away as a dream and shall not be found.
Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.
(xx. 4-8.)

The sweet fruits of his violence and oppression shall be taken from the spoiler, and he shall have no real enjoyment of his apparent prosperity. The fierceness of the divine wrath shall be cast upon him :—

The heavens shall reveal his iniquity,
And the earth shall rise up against him.

The increase of his house shall depart,
Worn away in the day of His wrath.

This is the portion of a wicked man from God.

And the inheritance appointed for him by God.

(xx. 27-29.)

In this outburst Job has not been directly addressed ; but he knows that it is all meant to apply to him, and he answers with scorn and impatience in the following chapter (xxi.) : Let them, he says, at least give him the consolation of being heard, and then let them mock on, if they will ! He is driven by the revilings of the friends to use the most intemperate language. Not only is it false (he declares) to hold that wicked men suffer, but even the contrary is true ! They live in power, in safety, in prosperity of every kind. Their herds and flocks increase, their children are numerous and joyful ; they themselves die, not by the terrible fate of which Zophar had spoken, but quickly and peacefully. All this is true, Job declares, even though they had neglected and despised the Almighty. Thus it is God that gives them *their prosperity*, not their own hand. How false then it is to say that they suffer for their wickedness. Even if it

be said that the children suffer, this is not justice: the suffering should fall upon the wicked man himself, and his own eyes should see his destruction, for it will be nothing to him what comes upon his house after him. The connection with the foregoing of the verses which next follow (xxi. 22-26) is not clear. There would seem to be an allusion to the mysteriousness and the despotism of Divine providence, in allowing one to die in his strength, and another in bitterness of soul. Job then refers again (ver. 27) to his own case, and to what the friends say and think of him. He repels their implied accusations, and repeats his assertion that the wicked man fares well. They might learn this by the testimony of "them that go by the way;" even by the evidence of these it might be known that the evil man is spared (and not injured) in the day of calamity; that he is led away and escapes in the day of wrath. Thus he is not requited for the evil he has done; he dies and is borne to the grave in honour, so that even the clods of the valley are sweet to him. Multitudes follow him [to the tomb] as they did in his life time. Such is the prosperous lot of the wicked man, showing the vanity of the comfort which Job has received from his friends, and the falsehood of their answers, (chap. xxi.).

To this, after some introductory words of doubtful import,* *Eliphaz* replies by directly charging Job with flag-

* *The sense* may be that man is not profitable to God, but only to himself. It is neither a pleasure nor a gain to the Almighty that

rant wickedness and with cruel conduct to others. But God (he says), from 'the height of heaven' has seen his ways, and has sent fear and darkness upon him in requital of his iniquities. Will Job continue in the old way which wicked men have trodden? (xxii. 1-15).

Eliphaz urges him to make God his friend and be at peace, and then prosperity (increase) shall return to him. The Almighty shall be his treasure, even as gold and silver to him. He shall lift up his face to heaven, and his prayer shall be heard; his vows shall be accepted, and light shall shine upon his ways.*

Job (in ch. xxiii.) replies to Eliphaz, without introducing any new consideration of special interest. He reasserts the hardship of his case; he wishes again that he could find the mysterious cause of his sufferings, to argue with Him, and to know what God would say to him in reply. So, perchance, he might be delivered from his Judge, when his uprightness had been established. But he cannot 'find him':—

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there,

Job is righteous. God, therefore, does not act from any selfish motive either of interest or fear: hence the inference (implied) that the sufferings of Job are caused by his own great wickedness, his iniquities without end—the old position of the friends, reaffirmed from a new point of view.

* The obscure words at the close of this speech are probably meant to intimate that when Job is cast down he shall be lifted up again, and be able to save and deliver others, by virtue of his own renewed power and rectitude, consequent upon his repentance. (xxii. 29-30),

And backward, but I cannot perceive him ;
On the left hand, when he doth work,
But I behold him not ;
He hideth himself on the right hand,
And I see him not.

(xxiii. 8-9.)

Then, again, in various phrase, Job asserts his innocence, and his steadfastness to the Divine commandments. But God has absolute power, and His purposes are inscrutable, and cannot be changed. Therefore is Job troubled and afraid, and his heart is faint ; he trembles before the Almighty One, because he was not cut off before the darkness came upon him, neither was the thick darkness removed from him—the latter words alluding to what Eliphaz had said in ch. xxii. 11.

Pursuing this strain, Job asks (in ch. xxiv. 1) why are not times and days appointed by the Almighty for trying and judging the unrighteous ? For they are guilty of many crimes ;—removing landmarks (so as to steal the land of others), and taking the sheep, the ass, the ox of the fatherless and the widow. Oppression and tyranny towards the poor of the land are spoken of in detail. These latter are driven forth by the harsh treatment of the violent ; they are driven forth to starve, to find scanty subsistence for themselves and their children, to lie *without covering* in the cold, and seek the shelter of the rock.

Probably the allusion in these verses is to merciless men who enslaved those indebted to them, and reduced them

to misery. Other cases of the same kind are mentioned—children taken from their parents, the garment taken from the poor, who are made to labour for their task-masters, treading the wine-press, and carrying the sheaves in harvest, hungry and thirsty. All this iniquity (Job declares) cries aloud to God for redress, but God does not stop it, does not notice it! (xxiv. 1-12.)

Others, again, pursue their iniquitous course in the night: they rebel against the light, and prefer darkness. These are the murderer, the adulterer, and men who break into houses,—morning to such persons is as the shadow of death.—(vv. 13-17.)

The succeeding part of this chapter (xxiv. 18-25) is extremely obscure. Job seems to contradict himself, asserting, first, that the iniquity of the wicked man does bring punishment upon him. 'Their portion is cursed in the earth.' He allows this, it may be, as a general principle, although he denies for himself that calamity can have fallen upon him in consequence of wickedness which he does not acknowledge. This, he has consistently maintained, is untrue of himself, however true it may be of some. Admitting, however, that 'unrighteousness shall be broken as a tree is broken,' yet he next goes on apparently to deny this. For, in vv. 22-25, he adds what seems to be out of harmony with such statements. Supplying the subject *God*,* in ver. 22, as seems to be neces-

* The insertion of this word is conjectural, but the context perhaps justifies it,

sary, we read that He draws (or continues) the mighty (wicked) by his strength; they rise up again (from misfortune or sickness), when they did not trust in life (expect to recover); He giveth them to be in safety, and they are supported, and his eyes are upon their ways, so that they are securely guarded. They are exalted; a little while and they are not (they have a quick and easy death); they pass away, and are gathered into the tomb, like any other man; no special punishment falls upon them. If it be not so, the speaker adds, who will prove him a liar, and make his speech nothing worth?

A somewhat close and literal translation of ch. xxiv. 18-21 will run as follows, the words 'he' and 'him' denoting the wicked man; and as these words thus represent a class, not an individual, the plural forms 'their,' and 'those who' are also used apparently as equivalent to them. The italics denote words not expressed in the original:—

Swift *is* he upon the face of the waters,
Their portion shall be accursed in the land;
He shall not turn by the way of the vineyards.
As drought and heat consume the waters of snow,
So doth Sheol *those who* sin.
His own mother shall forget him,
The worms shall feed on him,
He shall not be remembered any more:
Thus iniquity shall be broken like a tree,
Even he that devoureth the barren who beareth not,

And doeth not good to the widow.

(xxiv. 18-21.)

The words 'way of the vineyard' most probably denote the prosperity which the wicked are not permitted to enjoy. Instead of going among their own fruitful vineyards, they go down to Sheol and are forgotten. But, however literal the translation, the difficulty before noticed remains. As uttered by Job, these lines appear to contradict what he has elsewhere said (as in xxi. 7-18) to the effect that the wicked man is prosperous and happy.

The verses which follow are equally difficult in this connection, because, as before pointed out, they appear to assert the opposite doctrine—declaring that the wicked do *not* suffer, but are secure and prosperous. Not to dwell further upon the passage, it may be briefly noticed that there are two modes of removing, or, at least, alleviating, the difficulty thus presented. (1.) Job may be speaking ironically, not really meaning what he appears to say (vv. 18-21). He expresses the popular opinion only, but does not really hold it, for he has spoken before in the opposite sense, and he re-asserts this opposite sense in the closing verses of the chapter. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in the words themselves, that is to say in their form or in the structure of the passage, to require this interpretation. It is only the necessity of the *case* that suggests such an explanation. (2.) It has been *thought* that Job's language (vv. 18 21) is only an expres-

sion of what *ought* to be. According to the friends, the wicked man should pass away quickly, 'swift upon the face of the waters,' swept rapidly away and disappearing like the foam. As the heat melts the snow, so should the grave consume those that have sinned. They should be forgotten, broken as a tree, and remembered no more. But it is not so! God giveth them to be in safety, to live their time and pass away in peace (vv. 22-25). But, as before, there is nothing in the words themselves requiring us to read them in this qualified sense. So, finally, as there seems to be no certain way out of the difficulty, the reader will judge for himself as best he can.

To the foregoing speech of Job, Bildad replies briefly. He takes up only one point in his friend's assertions—namely the prayer of Job, that he might be allowed to plead with God. He reminds Job of the might and the purity of God—implying that Job would have no success in his argument with Him:—

How then can man be just with God,
Or how can he be pure that is born of woman?
Behold, even the moon giveth no light,
And the stars are not pure in his sight.
How much less man *that is* a worm,
And the son of man, a worm! (xxv. 4-6.)

These words of Bildad are little more than a repetition of what Eliphaz had said in his first speech (iv. 17-21).

Powerful as they are, their brevity would seem intended to indicate that the argument on the side of the friends is exhausted. They have no more to say, and Job is left in possession of the field. As compared, therefore, with his antagonists, he is victorious, and he, rather than they, has spoken what is true.

CHAPTER XI.

JOB'S CONTINUED DEFENCE—THE MISSING REPLY OF
ZOPHAR. (CHAPS. XXVI., XXVII.)

So far as we have now gone, the discussion has run through two complete courses. In the first of these, each of the friends has spoken in reply to Job, alternating with Job, who himself speaks once in reply to each of them. The same order of discussion takes place a second time, Job commencing with a reply to Zophar, and being himself, as before, answered by, and himself answering, each of the friends. This second course, we have seen, has comprised chapters xii. to xx. Then, the third time, the same order begins with ch. xxi. and goes on to the third reply of Bildad, which has just been noticed. To him Job replies, as before, but the third course is not completed. Job speaks at great length (through six chapters), but no reply follows from Zophar, as was to be expected.

Before noticing this change of plan more fully, it will be well to give a short account of what Job now advances, in the chapters commencing with xxvi. He begins with

an ironical reference to the part taken by the friends in the discussion. Little is the wisdom or the comfort which they have brought him. He proceeds at once to show that he knows and can speak of the Divine majesty, as well as they ; he is as wise as they are !—

The dead are in pangs beneath,

The waters and their inhabitants.

The grave is naked before him,

And there is no covering to destruction.

He stretcheth out the north over empty space,

He hangeth the earth upon nothing. (xxvi. 5-7.)

Thus, it is implied, the earth in all its parts, sea and air and the world beneath, are within the power of God :—

The pillars of the heavens tremble,

And are astonished at his rebuke ;

By his power he stirreth up the sea,

And by his understanding he smiteth Rahab. *

By his spirit he hath adorned the heavens,

His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.†

Lo, these are the outlines of his ways,

And how small a whisper we hear of him :

But the thunder of his power who shall understand ?

(xxvi. 5-14.)

* Compare ix. 13, for the explanation of this word, and see p. 56.

† Referring, probably, to the mythological monster before mentioned.

In these words Job expresses his profound sense of the greatness and power of the Almighty Being, and lets us know that he is not less able than the friends to speak of the Divine ways. No reply is made to him, this circumstance probably indicating the author's sympathy with Job's position, as against his opponents in the discussion. The turn to speak would now lie with Zophar; but no answer from him being forthcoming, Job renews his discourse. He turns (xxvii. 1-10) to speak more specially of himself. He commences with a strong protestation of his own righteousness—a form of oath, it would appear. Though his cause, he says, has been rejected by God, though tried and harassed as he is, still he will not, while life remains to him, assent to the doctrine of the friends. He will not renounce his integrity or let go his righteousness—that is to say, by the acknowledgment of unrighteousness. The wicked, he knows, are hateful to God; the lot of the wicked, let it fall to his enemy, he does not accept it for himself.

At this point, however (verse 11), Job turns abruptly to speak in the strongest terms respecting the Divine vengeance as manifested towards wicked oppressors and their children. In so doing he seems to contradict all his former arguments and to concede everything which the other speakers had maintained with particular reference to himself:—

*This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the inheritance of oppressors,*

Which they receive from the Almighty :
If his children be multiplied it is for the sword,
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
Those that survive him shall be buried in death,
And their widows shall not weep.

Terrors overtake him as waters,
A tempest stealeth him away in the night.
The east wind carrieth him away and he is gone,
And it sweepeth him out of his place.
It casteth itself upon him and spareth not,
Though he would fain flee out of its power.
Men shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.

(xxvii. 13-23.)

Once more the picture of the fate of the wicked man drawn by Job will be found to be in direct opposition to what he had said in chap. xxi. 7-20. Here he had declared, the wicked are prosperous and die in peace ; their children are numerous and happy. It is difficult to account for this obvious incoherence. Perhaps it is best to admit that there is some dislocation in this part of the composition. According to the structure of the poem, a third reply from Zophar was to be expected. The words of Job given in the latter part of chap. xxvii., would have been suitable in Zophar's mouth, and it has been held that, by some mistake of ancient copyists, his missing speech has been incorporated in the long passage

of six consecutive chapters ascribed to Job. There is no authority of any kind for altering the present arrangement of the poem, nor can it be certainly determined where the verses that might be assigned to Zophar should come in, if transferred to him. They might very well stand at the close of chap. xxvi. If then we should here insert chap. xxvii. 11-23, as the words of Zophar, Job would recommence with chap. xxvii. and, proceeding on to ver. 10, would then continue speaking as in chap. xxviii. All this, however, is only conjectural, and the form of verse 12 ('all ye yourselves have seen it,') may be thought to afford an objection to the proposed allocation of the words to Zophar. Job sometimes addresses the three friends collectively in the plural; whereas they usually speak to him in the singular. Why then should Zophar speak here, as if he were addressing not merely Job, but the two other speakers also? There is not much perhaps in this objection. There is, however, an alternative supposition, which some readers may think more admissible. It is to the following effect.

It may be that Job does really concede, in general terms, the leading principle of the friends (that wicked men suffer), while denying at the same time that it explains his own case, inasmuch as he steadily maintains his own righteousness. This explanation appears, however, to be out of harmony with the main purpose of the book, as formerly described. It would concede and justify the doctrine of the friends, so far at least, as to

admit that suffering is the sure consequence of sin. This comes very near to the idea that suffering is an evidence of past sin, but it is not identical with that idea. It may be, therefore, that the apparent discrepancy arises only from a little want of care on the author's part in stating more exactly what Job denies as a part of his own defence, and what he concedes as due to the general proposition that the Divine justice does sooner or later overtake the wicked man.

But, however this may be, no satisfactory solution of the great problem has hitherto been arrived at. Why does the upright man suffer affliction? Why is the wicked man so often allowed to enjoy his ill-gotten wealth and spend his days in health and prosperity?

Such are the questions which are involved in the great controversy, though they are not formally stated in so many words. But on such questions no authoritative decision has as yet been pronounced, nor is it easy to draw such a decision from the opposing views of the antagonists. Yet it seems clear that the author intends to let his readers understand on which side his own sympathies are enlisted. It seems clear that he regards Job's statements as nearer to the truth than those of his opponents, to say nothing of the fact that he has already in the prologue made known the real source of Job's misfortunes in the suggestions of the Satan, letting it in *this way be known* that they are not really to be attributed to the wickedness of the sufferer.

Hence again, both in the course of the discussion, and at the close of it, Job is allowed to express his thoughts at much greater length than any of the other speakers. And another circumstance further indicates on which side the author takes his stand. Much that Job has advanced is in harmony with what, later in the book, is attributed to Jehovah. Job does not pretend to account for his sufferings as his friends have done. He will not, indeed, allow that they are caused, or deserved, by his own iniquities; for this he feels to be untrue. He knows that he has not sinned against God so as to have personally incurred these dreadful afflictions. And, in general terms, this contention is allowed by Jehovah Himself to be just. Thus in chap. xlii. 7, we read, 'Jehovah said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.' This approval by Jehovah shows that the author is with Job in the argument and not with the friends, although it is also true, that there is some little inconsistency between what Jehovah is thus made to say, and his address to Job at the beginning of chap. xl. But in such a book as this, from an age so distant, and containing so many ideas which are strange to our modern ways of thinking, inconsistencies of thought, real or apparent, as well as archaic rudeness of expression, are very much what must be anticipated.

Job's conviction, let us not omit to note, that affliction

has come upon him undeserved, is his best support amidst all the evils of his lot, and this is, in truth, the truest consolation that a man can have, whatever the adversities which may befall him. To feel that he has striven faithfully to keep his conscience unstained by sin, that he has won for himself the approval of good men, and of the unseen Judge of all; this thought, whatever may occur, is still the highest consolation of the righteous man. And this consciousness of integrity Job will not, in the argument, let his friends take from him. Say what they will, condemn him as they may, still he can appeal to God himself, knowing and in his better moments proclaiming that He is a God of justice, and sure that He will, in some way, make known his servant's innocence before the world. This confidence is expressed in the earlier part of ch. xxvii., but the most remarkable passage in which it appears is near the close of ch. xix. The words referred to have been already noticed at sufficient length. See above, chap. IX.

CHAPTER XII.

JOB RETRACTS SOMEWHAT—THE CONCLUSION IN WHICH
HE FINALLY RESTS—THE DIVINE WISDOM.

IT has been noticed in the preceding chapter that the reply of Zophar is wanting at the close of the third round of the discussion ; and that this omission may have been caused by some ancient displacement of the speeches—a considerable passage (xxvii. 11-23), which forms a part of Job's reply to Bildad, seeming to be inappropriate to him, and more suitable in the mouth of Zophar. This, however, as before said, is pure conjecture ; and, perhaps, the better alternative is to take the book as it stands, and to consider the passage referred to as really a portion of the speech of Job. Returning, therefore, to this view of the case, it may be conceded that there is, at times, a want of sequence, and some degree of inconsistency in the speeches of Job. It may well be, again, that the apparent inconsistency is, at times, only on the surface.

It may be that the author intended his readers to understand that it was only in the moments of his irritation and bitterness of soul that Job had formerly spoken of

God as indifferent to justice ; and had represented the wicked as happy and prosperous. He did not really, in his better mind, intend to go so far as this ; nor does such a position represent his deeper and more deliberate convictions. On the contrary, he knows well that a sinful life is not acceptable to the Almighty, and not blessed with his blessing ; and Job believes that He lets this be seen by the course of his providence.

It is not then to be deemed true that when a man suffers, his adversity, whatever it may be, is the certain punishment of sin, or proof of guilt incurred ; neither is it always to be thought that, because a man suffers, he must needs, therefore, be a more sinful man than many who do not suffer. But neither again is it true that the wicked are the most prosperous. Rather must it be held, the Almighty does reveal himself often as the observer of men, and often too as the punisher of unrighteousness.

Job's acknowledgment to this effect comes out abruptly and strongly in the passage above referred to (xxvii. 11-23). The wicked man, he declares, does incur the divine anger, 'For it shall cast itself upon him, and not spare.'

If this view of the connection and sequence of the thoughts be adopted, Job will be regarded as qualifying his argument, and withdrawing some of the hasty expressions in which he seemed to impugn the justice of the Almighty. In thus proceeding, he places himself more

entirely on the side of truth and right than he had been in his contention that the wicked are conspicuously prosperous. It is beyond question that the righteous life is not only blessed by the divine approval, but on the whole and in the result is more conducive to the peace, the health, the happiness of a man than the life of sin, of crime, of frequent or habitual vice. Probably, no thoughtful person, certainly no religious man, would dispute this position. Thus then, does the Almighty Father let us see, by the actual experience of life, that his blessing attends the righteous; and that the providence of the world is such that evil doing of every different kind, the indulgence of low and selfish appetites, even the neglect of due restraint on speech and temper, shall lead to unhappy, miserable consequences.

There is thus, in constant operation in the world, a great moral force or law, according to which, in general terms, virtue tends to peace and to happiness, if not always with equal sureness to temporal prosperity, while vice has just the contrary tendency. But yet, while this is true, cases may also occur, in which the operation of this great law is interfered with, or not clearly seen, cases which cannot as yet by man's intelligence be reduced within the visible action of such a law. That of Job himself, may be taken as the type of such exceptional cases. *Here was the good man, in the poet's conception, suffering grievous misfortune, and bodily affliction of the most dreadful kind.* This, as we see, from the Prologue

of the book, and as Job maintains, could not be rightly attributed to his evil doing, his sinful, undevout life. It was not a just retribution, as the friends so eagerly maintain; otherwise it might have been accepted by the sufferer with humility and penitence. In such a case, then, what are we to say? What to do? The writer of Job proceeds to answer this question. We are still to acknowledge and to trust in the divine Wisdom, even amidst the most inscrutable dealings of the Almighty providence. We are not, indeed, to say with Job's opponents that all calamity is of the nature of a judgment; for this we cannot know; but rather that all is in God's hand; that He knows best; that He, the judge of all the earth, must do right, even though we, mortal men, in our shortsightedness cannot always understand his dealings with us.

This lesson of man's inability to penetrate into the mysteries of divine providence comes out nowhere so plainly as in Job's last speech. It may be said to form the burden of chap. xxviii. This chapter commences as abruptly as chap. xiv. It alludes first, and very particularly, to well-known mining works of man. These, vast, laborious, and wonderful as they are, do not show man to be able to find out the hidden things of God. He can, indeed, in his operations go down deep into the earth, by a path which the falcon's eye hath not seen, *nor the fierce lion passed over; putting forth his hand upon the rock and cutting out shafts by which to descend,*

and channels to drain off the water from the recesses and caverns in which he works. These are references to mining as it is known to have been carried on in Egypt and in Palestine in ancient times, and which, it may be inferred, the writer looked upon as among the most wonderful achievements of his day. Man, then, can do such extraordinary deeds as these, and bring forth to the light iron, and silver, and copper, and gold. But can he find out wisdom? Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?

Man knoweth not the price thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.
The deep saith, It is not in me:
And the sea saith, It is not with me.
It cannot be gotten for gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed as its price.

(xxviii. 13-15.)

The wisdom thus referred to must evidently be explained in connection with the whole previous discussion of the book. It is God's wisdom; in other words, that inscrutable plan by which the world is governed, and which allows one man to suffer and another to enjoy, in a manner which so often perplexes the human intellect. This wisdom then man cannot find out. But

God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth under the whole heaven,

This divine wisdom is exemplified in various ways in the wonders of creation. To a certain extent it is also revealed to man, as is stated with much abruptness, but with startling emphasis in the last verse of this chapter:—

And unto man he hath said,

Behold, the fear of Jehovah, that is wisdom ;

And to depart from evil is understanding.

It is thus taught that the Almighty Will orders the government of the world on principles which man cannot fully comprehend, but yet that man's true wisdom is the 'fear of Jehovah,' his best understanding 'to depart from evil.' Amidst all trial and suffering, man shall still trust in God, shall still look up to Him with religious reverence and worship, and still act, so far as he knows, in accordance with his highest sense of right—turning from the evil which God abhors, and seeking after the righteousness and truth which He approves.

Such, in all probability, is the great and reverent 'conclusion of the whole matter' on which the author of this ancient book, like the author of Ecclesiastes,* takes his stand ; the lesson which he sought to recommend, and in which he found the only solution of the problem that was open to him.

Practically, this doctrine amounts to a simple doctrine of trustful resignation to the supreme disposal. It does not explain for us *why* it is that the calamities of life fall upon us. It does not suggest that they are to stir us up

* Eccles. xii. 13.

to better, more strenuous exertion ; or to awaken in our breasts sympathy for those who suffer ; or to be the means of leading man on, even against his own will, to higher and yet higher degrees of either virtue, or knowledge, or triumphant mastery over the natural world around him. Doubtless such *are* precious results and tendencies, more or less direct, of the trials and difficulties which so largely enter into human experience. But of all this the author of Job has thus far said nothing. He simply leads us to see that the ways of God are inscrutable. They cannot be fully discerned by man. His part, therefore, is to endure patiently, yet still "to fear Jehovah," and to "depart from evil."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION OF JOB'S SPEECH—HE DEFENDS THE CHARACTER OF HIS PAST LIFE.

THE three chapters (xxix-xxxi) which follow Job's description of the divine wisdom, are mainly occupied with a prolonged defence of his own past life. In his present miserable condition he wishes that he were as in the days and months of old, when the light from on high shone upon him, and the 'secret of God' (intimate communion with Him) was in his tent. He enters into a minute statement of the happy circumstances in which he then lived. His children, now destroyed, were yet with him; plenty was around him; the respect of young and old attended him; princes and nobles were silent in his presence; people around blessed him, and in particular the poor, the fatherless, the widow whom he protected and helped. He was righteous, he tells us, in his administration of justice, when he sat as a judge at the gate of the city, hearing the cause of the needy, ready to defend *them*, and to pluck the prey out of the teeth of the unjust oppressor. The description is graphic and interesting.

as a picture of the stately life of an oriental chieftain in the ancient days. He goes on :

Then I said, I shall die in my nest,
And I shall multiply my days as the phoenix ; *
My root is spread out to the waters,
And the dew lieth all night upon my branch ;
My glory is fresh in me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.

(xxix. 18-20.)

He then speaks of the reverence with which he was listened to. His speech was received as eagerly as the rain ; men scarcely believed that he would condescend to smile upon them ; and they rejoiced in the light of his approval. He sat as chief among them, and dwelt as a king in his army, as one who gave comfort to mourners.

Such was the happiness and the distinction of Job in the former times. But now comes the terrible contrast. The picture which follows (chap. xxx.) is drawn in the darkest colours, some of the particulars being scarcely intelligible, according to our modern ideas. One who had been so conspicuous for his benevolence and his justice, might, we should think, in his misery, have met with compassion at the hands of those whom he had be-

* In all probability this is the correct rendering, as recognised in the margin of the Revised Old Testament. The fabulous bird called the phoenix was famed for the length of its life. It was especially associated with Egypt, and according to Herodotus, with the temple of the Sun in the Egyptian town of Heliopolis. (Herod. II., 73.)

friended. But there is no statement to this effect. On the contrary, only contempt and cruel insult and injury await the sufferer. The passage in which all this is described is perhaps the most difficult in the book. It may best be understood as a highly figurative description of the miserable state into which misfortune after misfortune, together with bodily disease, have brought the afflicted man. The details of the picture are largely, it may be thought, the creation of the poet's imagination, but they had, no doubt, some foundation in actual circumstances—though what these may have been it is hard to conceive. It is thought, however, that the earlier part of this chapter (xxx. 1-15) refers to the aboriginal natives of Idumea, who had been conquered and reduced to the miserable condition here described by invading tribes. These people had been forced into a base servitude, and they are ready to take advantage of any opportunity of avenging themselves upon a once powerful person like Job, who is now brought into a condition of distress, and in his misery and weakness is unable to protect himself. The same class of persons may be referred to as in chap. xxiv. 4-12, where they are represented as themselves the victims and the slaves of powerful masters. Now, some of them have turned upon Job and treat him with derision. The particulars which the poet gives of these people are curious and interesting; but it *must be added*, various words and expressions in the passage are obscure and hardly intelligible: 'Now,' he says,

They deride me that are younger than I
Whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my
flock.

Yea, the strength of their hands,
What was it to me—

Men, in whom ripe age had perished ?

In want and severe famine,

They gnawed the dry ground,

In desolate darkness and desolation,

Plucking the saltwort among the bushes,

And the root of the broom as their food.

From the midst *of men* they were driven forth,

Men cried after them as after a thief ;

Making them to dwell in the clefts of the valleys,

In holes of the earth and of the rocks.

Amidst the bushes they brayed ;

Under the thorns they gathered together ;

Worthless, base born men,

Cast out of the land.

And now I am become their song,

Yea, I am a by-word to them.

They abhor me, they stand aloof from me,

And refrain not from spitting before me.

For he hath loosed my cord and afflicted me,

And they have cast off the bridle before me.

At my right hand the brood arise ;

They push away my feet

And cast up against me their ways of destruction.

They tear up my path,
My calamity they help forward,
Though there is no one to aid them.
As through a wide breach they come,
Amidst the ruins they roll themselves ;
Terrors are turned upon me.
They pursue my dignity as the wind,
And my welfare is passed away as a cloud.

(xxx. 1-15.)

After this description of the treatment which he receives from those around him, Job passes on to speak more particularly of his own bodily sufferings. Days of affliction have come upon him. By night and by day he knows no rest from pain. His disease clings to him like a garment, and he cannot put it off. He then turns, as before, to address himself in piteous words to God. Speaking directly to Him, he pleads :

I cry unto thee and thou answerest me not,
I stand up and thou lookest on me,
Thou art turned to be cruel to me,
With the might of thy hand thou persecutest me.
Thou liftest me up to the wind,
Thou makest me ride upon it,
And thou destroyest me as with a tempest.
For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,
And to the house of meeting for all living ;
*Surely he will not put forth his hand upon my ruins,**

* *That is the ruin* to which disease and calamity have reduced

Since in his calamity *there will be* peace to them.

(xxx. 20-24.)

Job next refers to his own compassion for the unhappy ; but how different is his own lot in his misery ; when he looked for good, evil came, and for light there was darkness. He is agitated, and has no rest ; he stands amidst his friends and cries for help ; as the wild animals, the jackal, and the ostrich cry in the night. His disease is heavy upon him, blackening his skin and burning his bones with heat. Thus is his harp turned to mourning and his pipe into the voice of them that weep.

This sorrowful picture is followed by a renewed and powerful assertion of the righteousness and innocence of his past life, intermingled with imprecations upon himself, in case he be not speaking the truth, and with appeals to God to bear witness in his behalf. He had previously (chap. xxiv.) spoken in vindication of his conduct as a public character. He now refers mainly to his private life, and affirms the purity and uprightness of his feelings together with the regard which he had for the judgment of the Almighty (vv. 1-12.) He has been just, he says, towards his servants, as being equally with himself creatures of the divine hand. Nor has he withholden their rights from the poor, the widow, or the orphan, but has bestowed upon them food and clothing, *as they have had* need. If he has not done so, then he

him. The meaning of the next line cannot be given with any confidence : *his calamity*, that which He inflicts.

wishes that the most dreadful punishment might fall upon him.

Then let my shoulder-blade fall from my shoulder,
And mine arm be broken from the bone.

For calamity from God was a terror to me,
And by reason of his majesty I could not *do this*.

(xxx. 13-23.)

Nor again, Job continues, has he put his trust in gold, or rejoiced because his wealth was great. He has not been addicted to idolatrous practices, paying a secret homage to the sun or the moon; this would have been to deny God that is above. He has not wickedly rejoiced in the calamity of his enemy; nor has he sinned by asking his life with a curse. Further, he has practised hospitality (ver. 31), so that the stranger and the traveller have been received within his doors. He has not been afraid of the opinion of others, so as to conceal his transgressions; or of the contempt of tribes or families around him. At this point the strain of his protestation suddenly changes. What has gone before, for many previous verses has been of the nature of an oath, with an imprecation expressed or understood: if all has not been as he has claimed—he does not finish the sentence as might have been expected, but turns abruptly to wish that he could be heard and answered by the Almighty, and that he might have the written charge that God would bring *against him*. The reference may be to the proceedings of a trial in a court of justice—the mode of trial (perhaps

Egyptian) being by means of written accusation and defence. He continues :—

Oh that I had One to hear me !

Lo, here is my signature,

Let the Almighty answer me ;

And *O that I had* the accusation,

Which my adversary has written !

Would I not take it upon my shoulder ?

I would bind it to me as a diadem :

The number of my steps I would declare to him,

Like a prince I would approach him.

(xxx. 35-37.)

Thus, he says, he is so confident of the rectitude of his life, and so sure that the judgment of the Almighty would be in his favour and against the friends who have accused him so wrongfully, that he would be bold enough even to enter into the divine presence, and draw near to God, to receive his sentence.

Here, it would seem, the chapter should conclude. But as the text stands, three verses follow of a singular and unsuitable character, taking up the strain of some preceding verses :—

If my land cry out against me,

And the furrows thereof weep together ;

If I have eaten its produce without payment,

And caused the soul of its former owners to faint,

Let thistles grow instead of wheat,

And noisome weeds instead of barley. (vv. 38-40.)

The meaning is that Job has not obtained his land by injustice, so that it should, as it were, cry out against him; nor has he taken its produce from the rightful owners without paying for it. But the words are so inappropriate as a conclusion to the impassioned appeal which they follow, that it is probable we have here again some displacement of the text. Some commentators alter the position of these three verses, by placing them between verses 25 and 26. They would certainly come in more fitly there than where they now stand.

Next, we are told, 'the words of Job are ended'—a remark which may have been added, not by the original author, but by some later hand. But this again is only a conjecture; and the words help, at least, to form the transition to the long speech of Elihu, which will form the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV,

THE SPEECH OF ELIHU, ITS POSITION IN THE BOOK AND
ITS PROBABLE TEACHING.

THERE is something imperfect, it may be seen, and akin to mere fatalism in the conclusion at which the author of this book has thus far arrived. Calamity, he tells us, is God's appointment, God's doing, and man cannot resist or escape from it. He has simply to trust in the inscrutable Wisdom, to submit, in faith and patience, however dark and painful the circumstances of his lot. But, it may still be asked, is there not something more to be said, in explanation, in justification, of the trials of human life? And does not the speech of Elihu which comes next in order, introduce a somewhat different idea into the discussion, and even throw something of new light upon it? Both of these questions may be answered in the affirmative. In regard to Elihu's contribution in particular, it has been thought that a *new and important* doctrine is brought forward by this *speaker*, although it is but faintly suggested by his words. *Before* however, proceeding to the consideration of what

Elihu advances, it may be well to notice a point of much interest in the criticism of the book.

The chapters attributed to Elihu have been regarded as an addition to the poem as it came from the hand of the original author. They contain some peculiarities of language and expression, which are believed by excellent authorities to justify this account of their origin. These peculiarities cannot be suitably discussed in the present connection. But it may be observed, that the particulars referred to are not of a decided or conclusive character; for there is always the consideration to be remembered that so thoughtful and eloquent a writer as the author of this book might have purposely adapted words and ideas to the character which he attributes to a new speaker. Variety of such a kind is what may be looked for in a dialogue like this in which different persons are represented as taking part. The question however remains, supposing variety of expression thus intentionally introduced, whether the sentiments of Elihu are such as are essentially inconsistent with the rest of the book. The grounds for so considering them will not be found to be of great weight. Elihu, in the course of his speech, seems to explain and account for the dealings of divine providence. Human suffering, the bereavements and afflictions which visit mankind, are as he probably intimates intended to work in us certain ends of moral discipline. They are designed sometimes to rebuke the presumption of men, their impiety, their wrong doing

sometimes to awaken them to a deeper sense of their own weakness and dependence upon God ; or again, to arouse them to make new efforts for their own improvements. All this is presented in scattered and broken expressions, which are indeed, at times, so vague in their import that it may even be going too far in some instances to ascribe such a meaning to them.

With his position, so far as it is presented, that calamity is an appointed medium of moral discipline, Elihu also appears to combine the old doctrine that it is in itself an indication of past sins, and shows the need of correction on the part of the sinner. And the correction sent is of divine mercy and goodness, even though it be only in the form of severe trial. It is administered to man, says Elihu, in various ways. After referring to warning dreams and visions (xxxiii. 14-16) he goes on to say, in effect, that severe disease, and also (xxxvi, xxxvii) the changes of outward nature, storms and cold, and rain, and darkness, and thunder and lightning, all these proceed from God, and have the same high purposes of discipline as their destined end. 'He causeth it to come, whether for correction or for his land or for mercy.'

The position thus taken by Elihu will be better seen by a short analysis of his speech. But it must be *observed that this is in parts highly obscure, the connection of the thoughts is at times scarcely to be traced, and the transitions are as abrupt as in any other part of*

the book—all these features being as strongly marked in this speech as elsewhere, and serving to uphold its claim to be considered a part of the original composition.

The wrath of Elihu, we are told, was kindled against Job and his three friends ; against him because he had justified himself rather than God, and against them, because they had found no answer and yet had condemned Job. He had waited for Job to speak, having held back because he was young, whereas Job and his friends are old. He had thought that their years and experience should have given them wisdom, but he has been disappointed in this expectation and so he will now speak for himself and show his opinion. He is full of impatience (chap. xxxii. 18-20), and eager to speak. And he will do so without unduly favouring any one, or giving flattering titles to him. In these preliminary words, Elihu indulges in some little diffuseness, and scarcely exhibits the modesty of demeanour which might have been expected from one who speaks of himself as young, in addressing those who are "very old." He then calls upon Job especially to hear him, and promises to speak with sincerity and clearness. With too daring a boldness, he even offers himself in God's place to speak "in God's stead ;" and he observes that, being only a man like Job himself, the latter need not fear to answer him, if he can. (xxxiii. 1-7.)

He goes on (vv. 8-11) to refer to statements of Job, and to cite the substance of some of his words. Count-

ing himself innocent he had spoken irreverently of God as his enemy, as one who had treated him ignominiously, putting his feet in fetters and observing all his paths. Elihu answers this by saying that Job is not just, in presuming to contend against One who is so much greater than man, and who will give no account of his ways. Yet, he pleads, the purposes of God are for man's good, to instruct him, to preserve him from evil, to correct and purify him in his sins. If, in the midst of suffering, a friend should speak to him, to show him what is right, and bring him to penitence, then is God gracious to him; He delivers him and restores him to health : so beneficial to man are the afflictions which God puts upon him :

Lo, all these things God worketh,
Twice, *yea* thrice, with a man,
To bring back his soul from the pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

(xxxiii. 29-30.)

In this chapter, Elihu seems clearly to recognise the end of suffering and adversity as being for man's chastisement and instruction. In the next chapter he continues this strain, and again addressing Job, he exclaims :—

Job hath said, I am righteous,
And God hath turned aside my right ;
Although I am right, I am treated as a liar,
Mortal is my wound though I am without transgression.

(xxxiv. 5, 6.)

This language, attributed to Job, Elihu censures in severe terms :—

What man is like Job,
Who drinketh up* scorning like water?
He goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walketh with wicked men.
For he hath said, It profiteth not a man,
To delight himself in God.

(xxxiv. 7-9.)

He then proceeds in his own way to speak in defence of God. *He* cannot do wickedness, or be unjust to a man, or pervert justice, but will render to every man according to his ways. Why should the Almighty act wickedly? He is the absolute Master of the world, and is possessed of irresistible power. He can, therefore, have no motive to do wrong. Will then Job condemn Him that is just and mighty?

Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art vile,
Or to nobles, Ye are wicked?

How much less fit to Him that accepteth not the persons
of princes,†

Nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?

(vv. 18, 19).

The next following verses set forth the great power of God, his knowledge of men, the impossibility of either

* *That is*, eagerly indulges in it.

† *Conjectural rendering, and meaning doubtful. The words in* *lic* *are not in the Hebrew.*

resistance or concealment before Him. This all-pervading dominion is specially exercised, Elihu declares, against wicked men.

In this statement there may be a reference to the case of Job, though he is not expressly named, and the description of the divine punishments is quite general. The design of these is to prevent the godless man from reigning and ensnaring the people. Surely then, one should submissively say to God (vv. 31, 32), 'I have borne punishment, I will not offend any more; What I see not teach Thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more.' Elihu then turns more expressly to Job, and says that 'God requites him as he deserves, though he refuses the chastisement.' The verse (33) is difficult, and the meaning may be variously explained. Perhaps it is a question: 'Shall he recompence according to thy judgment, that thou refusest what he doest? For thou shalt choose and not I; therefore speak what thou knowest.' Elihu appeals to 'men of understanding' to assent to his opinion, and again accuses Job of speaking without knowledge or wisdom, and of adding rebellion to his sin. 'In the midst of us (he says), he clappeth his hands, and multiplieth his words against God' (chap. xxxiv. 20-37).

In the next chapter Elihu repeats the substance of a *previous argument*. The greatness of the divine power *raises the Almighty* above every selfish motive. *What He doeth therefore must be right.* Job's wickedness

may hurt a man ; but (it is implied) God is not affected by it. Here (ver. 8) the speaker turns abruptly and somewhat incoherently to describe how men may be thus injured :—

By reason of the greatness of oppressions they cry out,
They cry for help by reason of the arm of the mighty.
In the next verse (ver. 10) there is another abrupt transition. The meaning probably is, that men are left in their troubles without help because they do not ask for it :—

But no one saith, where is God my maker,
Who giveth songs in the night ;
Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth,
And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven ?
There they cry but he answereth not,
Because of the pride of evil men. (vv. 10-12.)

The concluding verses of this chapter have a more direct reference to the case of Job :—

Surely God will not hear vanity,
Neither will the Almighty regard it ;
How much less when thou sayest thou beholdest him not.
The cause is before him ;
Therefore thou shalt wait for him.
But now, because his anger has not visited *thee*,
Neither doth he greatly regard arrogance,
Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vanity ;
He multiplieth words without knowledge.

(xxxv. 13-16).

In chap. xxxvi. Elihu proceeds with his argument. Again asserting his own uprightness and knowledge, he has yet, he says, words on behalf of God. He speaks of his might, his understanding, his observation of the wicked, and his vindication of the afflicted. Elihu refers again to the beneficial uses of affliction, which is intended to reach even kings on their thrones, to show them their transgressions and their pride :—

If they hearken and serve him,
They shall spend their days in prosperity,
And their years in pleasantness ;
And if they hearken not, they shall perish by the sword,
And they shall expire without knowledge.
Thus they that are godless in heart lay up anger :
They cry not for help when he bindeth them.
They die in youth,
And their life is ended among the impure.
He delivereth the afflicted by his affliction,
And openeth their ear by oppression.

(xxxvi. 11-16.)

In these verses we have the old doctrine of temporal retribution repeated, combined, however, with Elihu's characteristic idea, that of the corrective purpose of affliction. It is not merely a punishment, as the three friends had too indiscriminately insisted, but a proof of *Divine care and goodness towards the transgressor*. And *so, Elihu proceeds*, Job might, by penitence, have been *delivered out of his distress* (ver. 16) ; but he has been

obstinate, and he reaps the consequences, even the judgment of the wicked. Against this want of submission to God, Elihu utters his warning. Let Job beware; the Divine wrath is against him. No ransom or riches will avail to deliver him. He then exhorts Job (ver. 20) not to desire the night of death, as he had done, to take heed against iniquity, and not to choose it rather than affliction. He closes this part of his speech by again reminding Job of the wonderful and mysterious might of God, and illustrates his argument by referring to some of the great phenomena of the natural world :—

Behold God is great and we know him not,
The number of his years is unsearchable.
For he draweth up the drops of water ;
They pour down rain according to his vapour,
Which the skies shed down,
And distil upon man abundantly.
Yea, can one understand the spreadings of the clouds,
The thunderings of his tabernacle ?
Behold he spreadeth his light around him,
And covereth the depths of the sea.
For by these things he judgeth the peoples ;
He giveth meat in abundance.
He covereth his hands with the lightning ;
And giveth it a charge against his adversary.
The noise thereof telleth concerning him,
The cattle also tell concerning the rising storm.

The meaning of some expressions in this passage is far from clear ; but its effect, we may see, is to depict the wonders of divine power, as manifested in a storm. The next chapter (xxxvii.) proceeds with the description, thunder and lightning being ascribed to the direct working of the Almighty, as they usually are in the Old Testament. And not only are the lightning and the thunder a visible manifestation of God, but other natural phenomena are the same. The Hebrew poets and prophets know nothing of secondary causes, as, indeed, we moderns know perhaps as little, although we have given names to various great physical phenomena—*forces*, as they are deemed, such as gravitation, heat, electricity, light, life. Of each of these it may be asked, does the man of science really know anything beyond the outward effects which they produce? Are not all of these words but as names which put a kind of veil over human ignorance? The writer of Job, at all events, like other Biblical authors, ascribes these wonders of the outward universe to the immediate action of God :—

God thundereth marvellously with His voice ;
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.
For he saith to the snow, Fall thou on the earth ;
Likewise to the rain storm,
Even the stormy rains of his might.
He sealeth up the hand of every man,
That all men whom he made may know it,

.

Out of the region of the south* cometh the whirlwind,
And cold out of the north.

By the breath of God ice is given,
And the broad waters become solid,
With moisture he ladeth the thick cloud ;
Again, he scattereth the clouds with his light.
Thus he changeth the seasons† by his counsels,
That they may do all that he commandeth them,
Upon the face of the habitable world ;
Whether for correction, or for his land,
Or for mercy, he causeth it to come.

(xxxvii. 5-13.)

The latter part of this chapter is an anticipation of much that occurs in the speech of Jehovah, and may be taken to have proceeded from the same deep sense of man's inability to understand the workings of the divine power :—

Hearken to this, O Job,
Stand and consider the wonderful works of God ;
Dost thou know how God layeth his charge upon them,
And causeth the light of his cloud to shine ?
Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds,
The wondrous things of him that is perfect in knowledge ?
How thy garments are warm,

* Compare ix. 9.

† Perhaps too free a rendering : the meaning may be 'he turn-
eth (altereth) the things around us.'

When he quieteth the earth by the south wind?*

Canst thou with him spread out the sky,

Strong as a molten mirror?

Here Elihu pauses for a moment, as if to rebuke the presumption of Job. 'Teach us,' he says:—

Teach us what we shall say to him;

For we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

Shall it be told him that I would speak?

Or should a man wish to be swallowed up?†

After this remonstrance, Elihu continues his description of the marvellous changes of nature:—

And now men see not the light which is shining in the skies:

But the wind passeth and cleanseth them.

Out of the north cometh brightness:

Around God is terrible majesty.

The Almighty! We cannot find him out,

He is excellent in power and in judgment,

Yea, plenteous in justice he will not oppress!

Men shall therefore fear him;

He regardeth not any that are wise of heart.

(xxxvii. 14-24.)

Thus Elihu comes to the same conclusions as Job in chap. xxviii. Man cannot understand the doings of

* Which brought heat, and the stillness often accompanying it.

† Meaning uncertain: perhaps it is, 'if a man should speak, surely he would be swallowed up,' that is, for his presumption.

divine power and wisdom ; but still he should trust and fear—a conclusion which again suggests as the source of this speech the same devout sense of the unsearchable wisdom which so clearly appears in that chapter. The speech of Elihu must, therefore, on this ground too, be held to be an original and integral part of the poem—unless, indeed, it should be regarded as a mere imitation by some later hand of the great speech attributed to Jehovah in the following chapters. Few persons probably will so consider it.

However this may be, it is certain that the words of this speaker express very exalted ideas of the greatness of God, as well as of the uses of adversity and suffering in his government of the world. Nor is what Elihu says by any means out of harmony with what we elsewhere meet with in the book. It is, on the contrary, a fitting, or almost necessary supplement to Job's own doctrine of Faith. Job has said that we cannot find out the divine wisdom, cannot penetrate into the secrets of Providence so as to understand why things are as they are. We have simply to submit, 'to fear Jehovah and depart from evil.'

This is indeed true ; but it does not show that we cannot, to some extent, discern the uses of the adversity which we cannot fully understand. We *can* do so ; and it will help us the better to endure amidst trial, and to exert *ourselves* for the improvement of our circumstances and *our* characters, if we can see that even affliction may be

designed in many a case to arouse us to such efforts ; if we can see that by such means God himself would speak to us, and call upon us for the faithful striving, or the sustained endurance, which may render us worthier to be his servants and his children.

It might indeed be urged, in objection to this, that in proportion as you *account* for the trials and sufferings of life, and assign a definite end and use for them, you lessen in effect the possibility of a pure and perfect trust. As reasons are given why you *should* trust, so real trust itself disappears. Faith becomes knowledge and is no longer faith. But, clearly, this consideration is not sufficient to prove that the thoughts expressed by Elihu cannot have proceeded from an author who intended to urge it upon us as a prime duty to trust and reverence Jehovah and depart from evil. The necessity for religious trust is by no means taken away by the fact that we can dimly see, or think we see, that affliction may serve beneficial ends in the moral training of the human being. Enough that is dark and sad still remains in our life, over and above what we can thus account for ;—quite enough to demand from us whatever of devout faith our hearts have to bestow.

However long and deeply we may ponder upon these high problems, amidst the doubts and the mystery that *envelope* the great question of the existence of evil, we *cannot know* with certainty sufficient to feel that we are *raised above* the need of Faith. So long as man, with all

his knowledge, is feeble, short-sighted, swayed by prejudice and passion, the creature of a day, and so long as God is infinitely exalted above our human ignorance, weakness and sin, so long will there be scope and motive enough for the exercise of faith in regard to his dealings with us, his administration of the infinite and to us unknown universe.

Nothing better, therefore, is left to man than to try to combine faith with knowledge in the way that is here recommended. We may rejoice, if, with Elihu, we can at times perceive that even the worst calamities, the hardest trials of suffering and sorrow, have a merciful element in them; that they are not all as so much pure evil added to the sum of our lives. Often, it may be, we cannot see so much as this; but then, again, even then, the loftier doctrine of Job's better moments is still there for our guidance, 'Though he slay me yet will I wait for him.' Absolute trust in the Great Disposer may still serve as our best and highest consolation. Him we may still revere, and seek to serve, even in the midst of earthly bereavement or bodily pain; and so, we reach the conclusion that the truest harmony of life is ever in this combination of reverent thought with patient submission and practical well-doing. And these, we know, are acceptable to the Great Father of all, because even such was the spirit of the life of him, in whom he was 'well pleased,' and who in the supreme moment of his career prayed and said 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

CHAPTER XV.

SPEECHES OF JEHOVAH—SOLUTION OF THE GREAT
PROBLEM.

THE chapters which remain for consideration, five in number, are chiefly occupied with the address ascribed to Jehovah, in reply to Job and the other speakers who have taken part in the discussion. It is obvious to remark that in what is thus set down as spoken by Jehovah we may properly look for the solution of the great problem which has so long exercised Job and his friends; or, in case a solution of it should have been already reached by any of the speakers, that we may expect to find this at least confirmed by what is now attributed to the Almighty. It is impossible to suppose that the author should have intended his readers to think of any conclusion which he might himself have arrived at, as contradictory to what he attributes to Jehovah, or as not being in the most substantial *harmony with what He says.*

Job, we have seen, has maintained that the divine wisdom is incomprehensible. It cannot be found out by

man ; whose part, nevertheless, it is to 'fear Jehovah,' and to turn from evil, even though he may not be able to understand the unsearchable ways of God. This lofty doctrine of acquiescence in the divine will occurs in the final speech made by Job in reply to the friends. In his earlier replies, it will be remembered, he had used a different tone. He had been impatient ; he had complained bitterly of his sufferings, had prayed for death, had accused the Almighty of unjustly oppressing him ; he had wished that God would appoint a time that he might plead with Him, and defend his innocence ; he had wished that his words were written down, yea, engraven on a rock, that they might remain to speak for him, if he were himself taken away, because he was well assured that his Vindicator was living, that He must one day appear for him upon the earth, and manifest his supreme justice by admitting the righteousness of his servant and condemning those who had so wrongfully held that his sufferings were a consequence of his own sins.

Having, then, represented the afflicted man as thus speaking, it remained for the author of the book, not only to show us Job's acquiescence in the divine wisdom, but also whether the Almighty would accept or repel, would justify or condemn Job's earlier, or his later doctrine. And this we are admitted to see in the speech now delivered by Jehovah. If therefore, we briefly observe *what that speech contains, it will show us, with little explanation, how the matter was decided as between*

Job and the Almighty, as well as between Job and his three antagonists.

Jehovah, we may understand, has been a hearer of all that has passed between the contending parties, and now he appears, as Job had wished. He breaks in upon the discussion with questions suited, more especially, to the sentiments, which Job the principal speaker has uttered.

Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said :—

Who is this that darkeneth counsel

By words without knowledge ?

Gird up now thy loins like a man,

For I will demand of thee,

And answer thou me.

This appearance of his Judge is what Job had wished and prayed for; for instance, when he had said (ch. xiii. 22), ‘Then, call thou and I will answer; or let me speak and answer thou me.’ It was to God that he had said this; and he had uttered words of complaint and reproach against the Creator of the world, declaring in effect that there is no justice in his dealings with men, for that the wicked prosper equally with the righteous. Is the man then, who has ventured thus to judge, possessed of the knowledge which shall entitle him thus to speak? Can *he penetrate into the secrets of creation, so as to understand, explain, or account for the origin of the various objects which lie around him, within his observation?*

The mysteries of the divine government of the world are not so immediately within his reach, as are those common objects of ordinary knowledge. How, therefore, shall he venture to speak of the ways of the over-ruling Providence, and to condemn these, if he cannot comprehend even the most familiar things of daily experience? Hence the questions of Jehovah :—

Where wast thou when I founded the earth ?

Declare if thou hast understanding.

Who determined the measures thereof,

If thou knowest ?

Or who hath stretched the line upon it ?*

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened ?

Or who laid the corner stone thereof ;

When the morning stars sang together,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy ? †

(xxxviii. 4.7.)

There is nothing perhaps more finely illustrative, of the Creative power to be found within the pages of the Bible, than these two chapters, quaint and peculiar though the ideas sometimes are. A great variety of the wonderful phenomena of nature are brought forward in succession, phenomena in the heavens and on the earth ; of the land and of the sea ; the dawn of day, the origin or source of light and of darkness ; the snow, and rain,

* So as to measure and proportion its different parts.

† Referring probably to the presence of 'angels' at the creation of the world—a poetical conception, as may be understood.

and hail, and lightning, and thunder ; the growth of the plant, the formation of dew, of frost and ice. Then the movements of stars and constellations are referred to, the existence of intelligence in man, and of instinct in various animals. Of these some of the most remarkable known to the writer are mentioned by name—the lion, the raven, the wild goat, the ostrich, the wild ass, the horse, the hawk, and the eagle, are enumerated, and their habits referred to. This is done partly in the form of questions, which are such, either that Job cannot answer them, or, if he can, that the answer shall effectually remind him of his own feebleness, and of the mighty Power that is over all ; so that he can only remain silent and confounded at the thought of the boldness and presumption with which he had formerly spoken.

Some of the more striking parts of this long speech of Jehovah are the following, with a few annotations, where these seem to be required :—

Since thy days began, hast thou given charge to the
morning,
Or caused the day-spring to know its place,
That it should take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it,
When it is changed as clay by the seal,
And *all things* stand forth as *its* garment,
And from the wicked their light is withdrawn,
And the high-raised arm is broken?

* The idea expressed here is similar to that of ch. xxiv. 13.

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea,
Or walked in the recesses of the deep ?
Have the gates of death been laid open to thee,
Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death ?
Hast thou discerned the breadth of the earth ?
Declare if thou knowest it all.

(xxxviii. 12-18.)

The questions asked thus far, have related chiefly to the land and sea. They now return to the wonders of the light, and some other phenomena of the air and sky.

Where is the way in which light dwelleth ?
And *as for* darkness where is its place,
That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And shouldest discern the paths to its house ?
Knowest thou, because thou wast then born,
And the number of thy days is great ?
Hast thou entered the storehouses of the snow,
Or seen the storehouses of the hail,
Which I reserve for a time of distress,
For a day of battle and of war ?
By what way is the light parted,
Or the east wind scattered upon the earth ?
Who hath cleft a channel for the water-flow,
Or a way for the lightning of the thunder,

Day-break puts a term to the deeds of evil men, night and darkness are their season. The light also changes the aspect of the earth, on which objects stand out to view, as clay is changed by the impress of a seal. The objects thus brought out, cover the earth as its garment.

To cause it to rain on a land where no man is,
 On the wilderness where there is no one ;
 To satisfy the desolate waste,
 And to cause the tender grass to spring forth ?

Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
 Or loose the bands of Orion ?
 Canst thou bring out Mazzaroth* in his season,
 Or lead forth the Bear† with her sons ?
 Dost thou know the ordinances of the heavens ?
 Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth ?
 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
 That abundance of waters may cover thee ?
 Canst thou send forth lightnings,
 That they may go,
 And say unto thee, Here we are ?
 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts ?
 Or who hath given understanding to the mind ?
 (xxxviii. 19-36.)

To this point the questions, have all been concerned with objects of inanimate nature, connected with the earth and sea, the air, the sky, and the heavens. The chapter should have been terminated at verse 38, which finishes the long enumeration of such objects. With the

* That is, the signs of the zodiac.

† The constellation also called Charles' Wain, which is the same as that of the Great Bear.

‡ Meaning of these two lines very uncertain, instead of 'wandering lights,' 'meteor,' 'dark cloud' other renderings are 'wandering lights,' 'meteor,' 'dark cloud'

next verse (39) we pass to animated nature, as it was known to the author. The closing verses of xxxviii. and the whole of the next chapter refer to the various animals, commencing with the lion, and concluding with the eagle. It is not necessary to give here the whole of this passage, in which there is little that calls for special remark. The questions are throughout, such as serve to illustrate the surpassing might of Jehovah, and to suggest the weakness and ignorance of the man who has presumed to dispute the justice of His government of the world :—

Canst thou take the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions ?
When they couch in their dens,
And abide in the covert to lie in wait ?
Who provideth for the raven his food,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And wander for lack of meat ?

(xxxviii. 39-41.)

Similar questions follow respecting the wild rock goats, and their young ones, which are born and grow up in their proper season, and thrive, * until they go forth from their parents. Then comes the wild ass, whose home is the wilderness, which scorneth the city and will not submit to a driver. Next, the wild ox (or

Chap. xxxix 4, R. V., 'Their young ones are in good liking,' this *unintelligible* phrase should have been corrected ; the meaning is, 'Their young ones thrive.'

buffalo) ; can Job tame and control this mighty creature, and make it serve him? The ostrich, too, which is wanting in care for her offspring, leaving her eggs in the sand to be hatched, or perhaps to be crushed by a passing foot : * so hardened is she against her young ones, and without fear for them, because God has given her no wisdom, although in speed she excels the horse and his rider. The description of the horse follows :— his strength, his swiftness, his activity, his courage, the fierceness of his delight in the battle, hath Job given these marvellous powers to the horse? or has he made the hawk to soar aloft, or the eagle to build her nest on the high crags of the rock, from whence she can espy her prey afar off, and provide for her young?

These questions and declarations, Job can only answer by his silence ; he makes no reply—a virtual admission of his inability to understand and pronounce justly on the mysterious ways of Providence. Hence, then, as before, if he cannot understand these commonest things, or imitate the divine power by doing the like, how should he venture to speak as he has done, to complain of God, and point out what it would be right for Him to do, even to rebuke him for what he has done ! Job remaining silent, Jehovah again speaks :—

* *The statement does not correspond to known facts, though the eggs are sometimes deserted, having been left by the bird in its long wanderings over the desert in search of food.*

Shall he that reproveth contend with the Almighty ?

He that argueth with God let him answer it !

(xl. 1, 2.)

Then Job speaks, but only to acknowledge his own unworthiness and inability to say more :—

Behold I am vile ;

What shall I answer Thee ?

I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

Once have I spoken and I will not answer ;

Yea twice, but I will proceed no further.

(xl. 3-5.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECOND SPEECH OF JEHOVAH—NEW WONDERS OF HIS
POWER AFFORDED BY BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN—
JOB'S ABASEMENT AND PENITENCE.

THE second speech of Jehovah now commences, introducing us to another phase of the argument. Job has not only contended with his human antagonists, but in so doing, he has been led to impeach or deny the righteousness of God. Hence the further questioning of this second speech, designed, we may understand, to bring him to see the futility of his attempt to carry on such a controversy:—

Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

Gird up now thy loins like a man ;
I will demand of thee,
And do thou declare unto me.
Wilt thou also annul my judgment ?
Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous ?
Or hast thou an arm like God,
And canst thou thunder with a voice like him ?
Clothe thyself now with excellency and dignity,

And array thyself with honour and majesty.
Pour forth the indignation of thy wrath ;
Look upon every one that is proud,
And abase him,
Look upon every one that is proud,
And bring him low ;
And crush the wicked in their place.
Hide them in the dust together,
Bind their faces in secret.*
Then will I also confess to thee
That thine own right hand can save thee.

(xl. 6-14.)

The import of these verses is much the same as we have had before. If Job be so confident in his own judgment as against the Almighty, let him act with the power of God ; let him humble the proud, and crush transgressors, and so prove that he can rule the world more justly, more efficiently than the Almighty.

The remainder of this second speech of Jehovah is occupied with a description of two additional wonders of the animal creation. These appear to be introduced in order still more to impress on Job his weakness and insignificance, in comparison with the greatness and the might of God. As the greatest wonders of all they are reserved appropriately to the close, because they are

* Meaning uncertain ; there may be an allusion to a custom of covering the faces of criminals for execution : otherwise, 'with-draw them from the light of day : ' destroy them.

likely more than any other living thing familiar to the writer to impress upon man the terrible power of Him who could create, sustain, and control even such creatures as these.

The animals referred to are, first, the hippopotamus, or river-horse, so called, of Egypt. In the English version it is termed *behemoth*, which is simply the Hebrew name in English letters, and this again may be only an adaptation to a Hebrew form of an original Egyptian word, denoting the animal. The word *leviathan*, also Hebrew, used as the name of the second creature, might denote any large serpent or serpent-like (*i.e.* flexible) animal; but, judging from the description here given, it is the crocodile that is meant, for which it would seem that the Hebrews had no special name of their own. Whether the word was also the imitation of an Egyptian word, there is nothing to show. Both these animals are natives of the Nile, and were, no doubt, more common in that river in ancient times than they are in our days. The description of their appearance and the allusions to their habits are minute and in the main correct. Of the behemoth the poet writes :—

He is the chief of the ways of God ;

He that made him hath given him his sword ; *

* Probably referring to the *teeth* which are strong and sharp, and (it is said) have been known to bite a man in two. The animal's food is noticed in the next verse. 'Mountains' can only mean the high ground in some parts of the Nile's course. Modern travellers speak of the damage done by this animal in such situations,

Surely the mountains bring him forth food,
Where all the beasts of the field do play.
He lieth under the lotus trees,
In the covert of the reed and the mire.
The lotus trees cover him with their shadow,
The willows of the stream surround him.
Behold, if a river overflow, he trembleth not ;
He is confident though Jordan swell up to his mouth
(xl. 19-23.)

Proceeding in the next chapter to speak of the leviathan,
or crocodile, similar questions recur :—

Will he make supplications unto thee ?
Or will he speak soft words unto thee ?
Will he make a covenant with thee ?
Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever ?
Wilt thou play with him as with a bird ?
Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens ?

None is so fierce that he dare rouse him up :
Who then is he that can stand before me ?
Who hath first *given* to me that I should repay him ?
Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

(xli. 3-11.)

where, in a short time, they will destroy whole crops of corn and clover. They are harmless, however, to other animals, if not provoked. 'In a very curious relic of antiquity, the celebrated Praenestine mosaic, river-horses are represented on the hillocks, that are there seen rising above the waters of the Nile, among the vegetables growing upon them'—(Wellbeloved, in loco.)—This mosaic may still be seen at Palestrina, near Rome.

At this point, the direct address to Job comes to an end. Jehovah is still, however, represented as speaking in the first person, 'I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, or the matter of his strength ;' and to this succeeds a long and minute description of the animal. But this description, detailed as it is, certainly does not appear to add to the weight of the rebuke as addressed to Job, but rather to draw away attention from it :—

Who shall strip off his outer covering ?

Who shall enter within his double jaw ? *

Who shall open the doors of his face ?

His teeth are terrible round about.

His pride is his strong scales,

- Shut together as with a close seal ;

One is near to another,

That no air can come between them ;

They are joined one to another,

They cleave together and cannot be separated.

At his snortings light shineth,

And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. †

* Meaning uncertain : perhaps it is, 'Who shall come with a double bridle for him ?' The animal's jaws are long, the teeth numerous and sharp, uncovered by lips, and very formidable in appearance.

† The foregoing lines are evidently a close description of the crocodile ; the eye of the animal is small but brilliant, and is said to have been painted by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of the morning. As he rises to breathe in the water, he dashes the foam about, and this sparkles in the sunlight. This is referred to in somewhat exaggerated terms in the next lines. (vv. 19-21.)

His heart is firm as a stone,
 Yea, firm as the nether millstone.
 When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid,
 By reason of terror they are bewildered.
 He counteth iron as straw,
 Brass as rotten wood.
 The arrow cannot make him flee :
 Stones from the sling are turned with him into stubble.
 Clubs are counted as stubble,
 He laugheth at the rushing of the javelin.

Upon earth there is not his like,
 That is made without fear.
 He looketh at every thing that is high ;
 He is king over all the sons of pride.

(xli. 13-18; 24-34.)

Humbled and penitent, Job replies with few words :—

I know that thou canst do everything,
 And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.
 Who *am I** that hide counsel without knowledge ?
 Therefore have I uttered *that* I understood not,
 Things too wonderful for me *which* I knew not.
 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak,
 I will ask of thee, and declare thou unto me.
 I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,

* Here, as in some other cases, the addition in the original of 'this' merely serves to emphasise 'Who;' and the sense is probably what is expressed above.

But now mine eye seeth thee ;
Wherefore I abhor *myself*,
And repent in dust and ashes.

(xlii. 1-6.)

With this confession by Job of his own ignorance and weakness, the argument terminates. But the author does not fail to let us see, more clearly than he has done before, that the true conclusion lies with Job and not with the three friends. This appears in the words of Jehovah addressed to Eliphaz (chap. xlii. 7)—‘ My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends ; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.’ Eliphaz is then directed to offer a sacrifice by the hand of Job : ‘ Go to my servant, Job, . . . and my servant Job shall pray for you ; for him I will accept ; that I deal not with you after your folly ; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.’ This command is duly obeyed, and then we are told, ‘ Jehovah accepted Job.’

To this point the narrative is much what was to be expected. That Job was right and the friends wrong, could not have been left by the author in doubt, and his purpose to oppose the ancient doctrine of temporal retribution required that he should now show that the result of the discussion was recognised by Jehovah himself as *in favour of the speaker* who had impugned that doctrine. *This consideration* seem to be quite a sufficient reply to

those who have supposed the last chapter of the book to be no part of the original composition, but the addition of a later hand on the ground of its weakening the force of Job's doctrine of trust in Jehovah. Neither the purport of this chapter, so far at least as verse 9, nor anything in its language seems to favour, much less to require, such a supposition.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOB JUSTIFIED—HIS RENEWED PROSPERITY—ABSENCE
OF ALLUSION TO A FUTURE STATE.

IN the concluding verses of the book (xlii. 10-16), we are told of the recompense that was made to Job for all his sufferings:—‘Jehovah turned the captivity * of Job, when he prayed for his friends; and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before.’ His relatives came to condole with him in his evil state, and to comfort him. They also bring him presents of money and jewels; and ‘Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.’ We are also told of the twofold increase of his possessions, and of the new family of sons and daughters that grew up around him. Job himself lived to the good old age of a hundred and forty years and saw four generations of his descendants. ‘So Job died, being old and full of days.’

* Of course a figurative expression, denoting that Job’s condition was now changed. It is only found in books of the Assyrian and Babylonian period—(Ezek. xvi. 53, 55; Hos. vi. 11). The occurrence of the phrase is in harmony with the supposition made in chap. v. as to the time of the composition of the book of Job.

This termination of the story, it has been often observed, somewhat mars and lowers the religious tone of the book. Job should not have been thus doubly rewarded with material prosperity for his piety and resignation. His lofty doctrine of submission to the divine will spoke for itself, and required no such recompense to set it off or recommend it. This objection is not without force ; but yet it was perfectly natural that the writer of the book, while in revolt against the old doctrine which interpreted suffering and misfortune as sure proofs of past sin and marks of the divine wrath, should yet be unable wholly to release himself from the influence of that doctrine. Hence, he could hardly fail to conclude the work as he does, by telling us how Job, the upright and perfect man, was not left to be utterly overwhelmed and lost in despair. He deserved a better fate, and a better fate was reserved for him. The Almighty would not allow his chosen and highly approved servant to perish under his misfortunes. If, therefore, it was in harmony with the leading purpose of the book to let the reader know that Job's view of the case thus met with the divine approval, how should this be more effectually shown than by the return of his old prosperity ?

Still it remains true that the picture which is drawn of Job's renewed happiness is a poetical representation only. The Almighty Ruler does not usually, or as a law of his providence, reward the righteous man who trusts in him and departs from evil, with such rewards as these. The

faithful man must not expect them ; possibly a very different lot may await him. But yet, however this may be, there will always to such a man be his own secret consciousness of having striven to fight the good fight ; of having faithfully done the work of duty which was given him to do ; of having borne the trials of his lot, with a calm and patient and trustful spirit. This precious fruit of righteousness is unquestionably the possession and the reward of him who by a life of practical well-doing makes himself worthy of it ; and this it must be added is even greater and better than the flocks and herds and other manifold riches, which in the poem at last rewarded the integrity of the ancient patriarch.

✕ In the result to which the author thus brings his argument, it is obvious that there is no reference to the doctrine of a future life, as tending in any way to throw light upon the problem which has been under discussion. It is on the contrary implied throughout that this mortal life is the only sphere in which the divine approval or disapproval is manifested and has its effect. There is nothing in the close of the book, or elsewhere in its contents, to suggest any higher issue. It will indeed be remembered that in chap. xiv. the author represents his hero as expressing himself in despairing terms with regard to the possibility of living again. So far as can be judged from what he has there written, the author *was not able to rise up to the thought of the higher life to come, or to think of it as that for which this present*

state affords the means of preparation and is, in an important sense, the way of admission. In such a conviction, therefore, the much tried man could not have found, and did not find, any alleviation for his sufferings. All the nobler, then, is the endurance which is attributed to him ; all the deeper is the piety which, resolving all into the inscrutable will, could so emphatically teach that amidst the severest trials of life, the true wisdom is still to fear Jehovah and depart from evil.

But while this is said, we may acknowledge, nevertheless, and be thankful to admit, the light which Christian thoughts and hopes have shed upon the darker problems of human experience. The spirit of Christ, and the faith which, by his word and example, have been so widely cherished among men, tell us in impressive and persuasive tones, that this life is not our all. And so we are invited to trust and believe that the existence we have in it is not to be judged by and for itself only, but to be taken in connection with that which is 'unseen and eternal.' Our mortal life is not then a complete whole but an incipient and imperfect scene ; which, if estimated without reference to any thing beyond, might well indeed in many a case awaken doubt and fear and distrust of the infinite goodness. But looking forward to greater issues than Job could conceive, we may still hold fast our faith that even the sufferings and troubles which come to us, *are not without a divine purpose ; that their end is even to help us to acquire the Christ-like temper of perfect*

obedience to the Supreme Will, and lead us to a devout waiting for the light which shall be revealed hereafter.

This highest lesson of adversity comes slowly, perhaps, and in ill-understood, incomprehensible, often painful ways and forms. But it comes to those who will receive it, whether in their own persons or in others with whom they may be connected in life, or in others, again, upon whose trials they may only be called to look, as it were, from a distance. And so we may learn by degrees, as time flies from us, that the most abiding and precious results of the earthly discipline are not in wealth, or in power, or in any good thing of the outward kind which this life has to confer, but, rather, in the mind richly stored with the fruits of experience and of varied knowledge; in the subjugation and control of evil passions and appetites; in love towards others, and the self sacrifice and active well-doing to which it prompts; in affections raised and purified, even though this be by the firey ordeal of affliction; in the whole spirit thus trained and conformed to the highest law of Christian perfection. Our life, we may thus know, with all its teaching and learning, and all its influences of good and evil upon us, can have no higher, better end than this—to make us, by God's help and blessing, fitter and yet fitter to enter in and join in the communion of Saints, *whenever it shall please the Almighty Father in his supreme control to call back to himself the living spirit which he at first bestowed upon us.*

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